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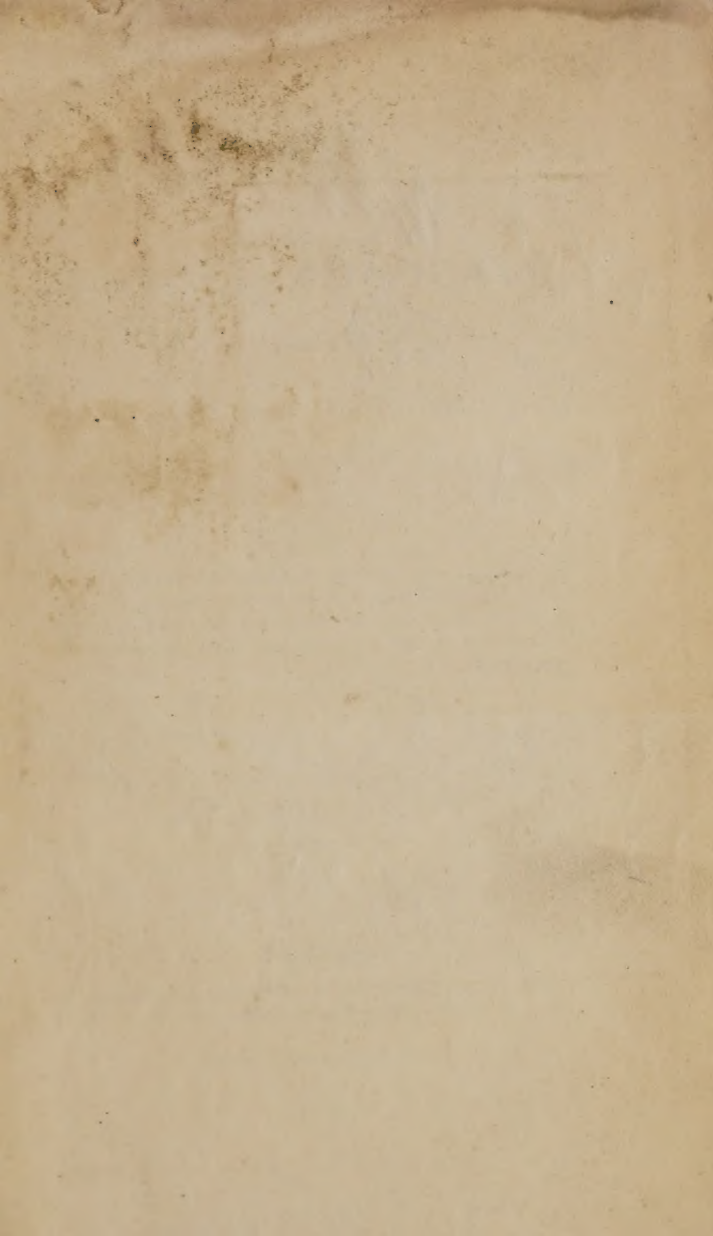
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THE  
GOSPEL ADVOCATE,

[Ed. Henry Acton]

JULY, 1833—JUNE, 1834,

INCLUSIVE.

Oportet in eâ re maximè, in quâ vitæ ratio versatur, sibi quemque confidere, suoque judicio, ac propriis sensibus niti ad investigandam et perpendendam veritatem, quàm credentem alienis erroribus decipi tanquam ipsum rationis expertem.

LACTANTIUS.

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VOL. I.

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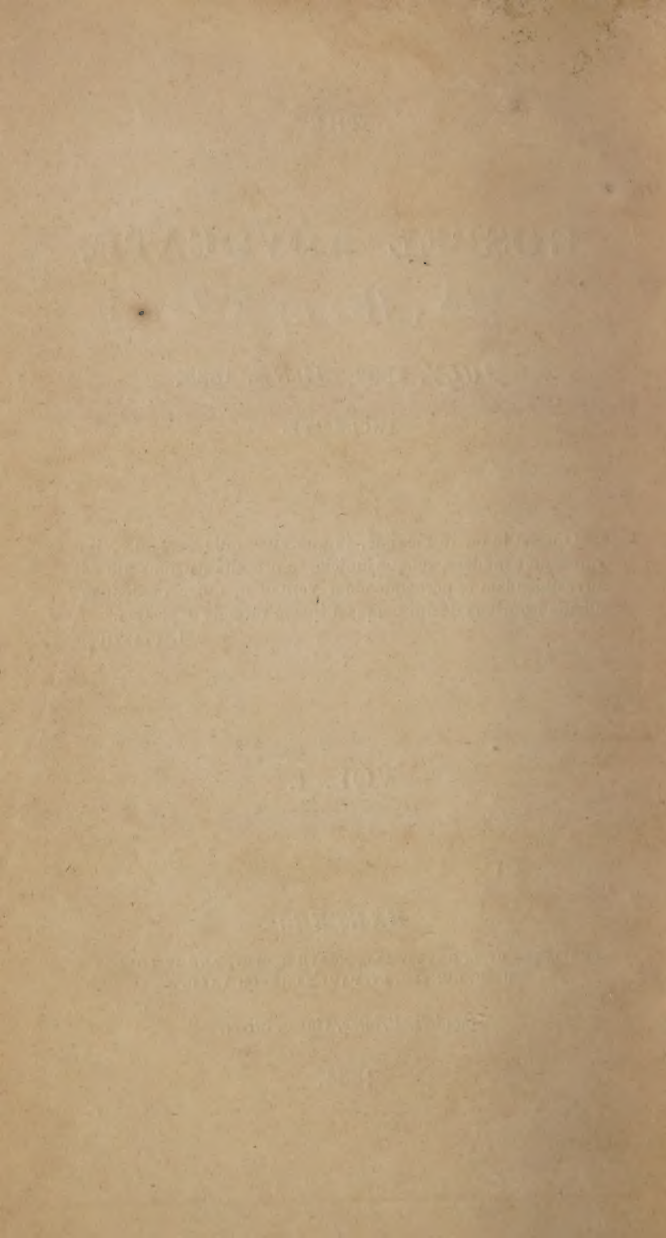
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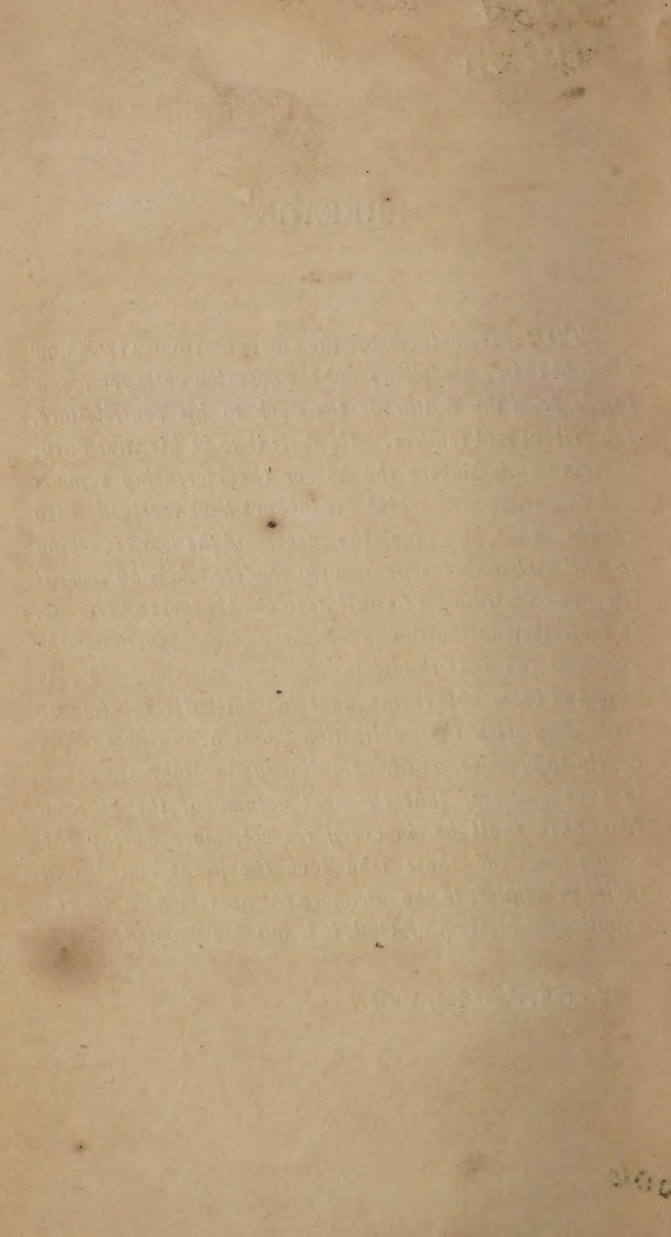


## PREFACE.

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*THE first volume of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE is now brought to its completion; and the occasion calls for a few words from the Editor of the work to his contributors, subscribers and readers. He feels it to be his first duty, to express his sincere thanks for the increasing support and encouragement which his labours have received. He is fully aware, how much the success of the work is owing to the assistance so generously rendered him by several literary co-adjutors; as well as to the kindness of friends, in remembering the design of the undertaking, notwithstanding too many defects in the execution. He is happy in being able to announce his settled resolution of proceeding with the publication; and he ventures confidently to promise, as far as ordinary foresight can reach in such matters, that the next volume of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE shall be, in every respect, more worthy the countenance of those who love the great moral and divine principles, to the advancement of which, under the supplicated blessing of God, it is humbly devoted.*

EXETER, June 1st. 1834.



# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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No. II.

AUGUST, 1833.

Vol. I.

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## ON SECTARIANISM.

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A CRY has frequently been raised,—we hear it often in the present day,—against the hateful spirit and manifold evils of *Sectarianism*. We are certainly not inclined to become the apologists of that which all wise and liberal men so justly abominate. We, too, abhor sectarianism. In whatever quarter it may shew itself, at home or abroad, near or remote, we will lend our best endeavours to reprove and check it. Even should this serpent rear its head within our own bosoms, it shall meet with no quarter at our hands. It is our honest intention, at least, in any such case, to cast it forth, and crush it with the heel. In so far as the name of sectarianism applies to exhibitions of spiritual conceit, intolerance, and presumption; to proud fancies of exclusive light and holiness; to that littleness of mind which rates the peculiarities of a creed above the great, the clear, the universally admitted principles of truth and piety; to those jealous, bigoted, uncharitable feelings, which have long been, and still are, the disgrace of the various parties into which the Christian world is divided,—so far we wage war, uncompromising war, with all sectarianism. There is nothing in our eyes more contemptible.

But we are not sure that all who join in this cry have sufficiently clear notions of what they mean to condemn. We are not certain, that all their feelings against what they call sectarianism are just and reasonable, and such as we can entirely approve. We are apprehensive that there may be a wrong feeling prevalent *against* sects, as well as *amongst* them. It will not be a solitary instance of the kind, if it shall be found in this case, on due reflection, that liberalism, in the eager indulgence of its favourite views, in the warm pursuit of its objects, has too hastily directed its scorn upon certain customs which, though evils in part, are unavoidably necessary for the prevention of greater evils; customs which are pure and praiseworthy



as to their origin, innocent and useful in many of their effects.

A *sect*, we take it, is nothing more or less than a division or party of men, united in the profession of certain views and principles peculiar to themselves. Some, perhaps, may require us to allow, that a *sect* is properly a division by separation from a greater body. They may say, that a sect, like a section, is that which is cut off, or separated, from the whole to which it properly belonged. We should not think it worth while to object even to this definition. If there be any to whom it is especially dear, on the ground of a cherished persuasion that *they* adhere to the main body, from which others are cut off,—we should be sorry to disturb their complacency. We would only remind them that it is very possible for a young shoot, which has been cut off and planted by itself, to retain all the original strength and virtue of the tree, to flourish and be fruitful, whilst the main trunk, through rottenness and corruption, is rapidly hastening to decay. In other words, there is nothing essentially indicative of wrong in being a part separated from a greater body.

But for our present object, it will probably be sufficient to say that a sect is a party of men, united in the profession of certain distinguishing tenets. In this sense, therefore, sectarianism may mean nothing more, than the division of the Christian world into various parties and denominations, according to their respective apprehensions of divine truth. Is there any thing essentially wrong in this—considering the present state of religious knowledge and opinion in the Christian community? We do not ask, whether such a state of things be in itself desirable? whether it can be justly regarded as the most agreeable to the spirit and designs of the gospel? Perhaps not. Though we are not disposed to think that either the evils of sectarian division, or the benefits of a perfect unanimity of opinion, are so certain and so considerable as they are commonly esteemed,—yet we shall not take upon us to maintain, that our present condition, in these respects, is the happiest that can be imagined. But we ask if it be not necessary, —unavoidably necessary,—unless we are willing to incur still greater evils, by the grossest violations of christian



integrity? Will any reasonable man contend, that there is yet such a general, right understanding of Christianity, diffused among the professors of this religion, that they can conscientiously all use the same forms of worship, attend upon the same instructions, and act together in all things that concern their moral and spiritual interests? It is plainly impossible. In the present state of religious knowledge and opinion, such an entire removal of all party distinctions,—such an outward and visible union, while there are so many causes of real and serious difference in the sentiments of men,—is wholly impracticable and visionary. Nor, for our own parts, do we feel the least yearning after such a state. It could only be hollowness and mockery, feebleness and servility. We like that men should appear what they *are*, in all things, but especially in religion. We ourselves belong to a sect, because we solemnly believe that this sect holds, in their purity, certain great and glorious truths of the Christian religion, which others have received in a most corrupted form, or abandoned altogether. But in the sincerity of our souls we declare, that we love no man the less,—we love him all the better,—for belonging to a different sect from our own; provided we have reason to suppose, that his honest convictions are different from those at which we have arrived. We should loathe ourselves, if we could for a moment take up with the blind conceit, that all truth, wisdom, virtue and piety, are confined to our own sect. We know it is not so. We have not the presumption to say, in what sect there is to be found, *all things considered*, the greatest degree of truth, wisdom, virtue and piety. We strongly suspect that no one of them is perfect in these qualities:—we are very sure that our own is not.

Some persons refuse to connect themselves, or to acknowledge their connection, with any religious denomination whatever. The respect that may be due to such a line of conduct must wholly depend on the motives, on the state of character altogether, in which it originates;—and these must be various in different individuals. If it arise from mere worldly-mindedness, from a total indifference to all religion, from a dislike to be troubled with any of its duties and observances, it is surely calculated only to excite our pity. If it proceed from a contemptuous scorn of all

sacred things, resting on the foundations of ignorance and conceit, it is then still more culpable, still less entitled to any degree of respectful sympathy. But sometimes, we have no doubt, this avoidance of all sects and parties originates in better feelings. The minds of some men are really unsettled, not from any fault of theirs, but from the difficulty they find in coming to a knowledge of the truth. They are in search of true religion. They would candidly embrace it, if they knew where it is to be found. But they cannot satisfy themselves that any sect is in possession of this precious treasure; and in the mean time, they see a great deal in the ways and dispositions of all sects which utterly disgusts them. They will, therefore, have no connection whatever with any religious party; or as little as possible. Now, we have much sympathy and respect for serious and sincere persons in this state of mind. We are not surprised that there are many persons so inclined in these times:—we rather wonder they are not more numerous. The general condition of the Christian world at the present day,—the imperfect degree of knowledge at which we have arrived concerning the truths of the gospel,—is precisely such as is most calculated to produce this state of mind. We believe, in fact, that with shrewd and intelligent people who pass for sceptics in the eyes of sectarians, this state of general indecision and dissatisfaction is far more common, than any absolute unbelief, any positive, confident denial of christianity. It appears to us that such persons are entitled to be treated with perfect candour and good will. They are not to be hunted down, as enemies to all religion, because they *will* not, or *can* not, take a decided and zealous part in support of any peculiar set of opinions. Perhaps, one of the most effectual means to the conversion of such persons, would be for us, who do belong to particular sects, to amend our own ways; to become less dogmatical and presumptuous; to abstain from all interference with the private sentiments of individual members of our churches; to adopt, in short, the wise advice of the apostle Paul in reference to such cases:—*Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.*

Whilst we maintain these views, however, (which we do with all sincerity,) in behalf of non-sectarians, we expect them to make us a fair and suitable concession in return.

We require them to admit, that all who have attained to strong, definite, settled views of religion, do right in attaching themselves to those sects or churches, with which they agree on all great and leading principles. The benefits of social worship, and of constant religious edification, can scarcely be secured in any other way. This will be an important consideration with all serious people :—to heads of families it is one of extreme interest, and one to which no small sacrifice ought to be cheerfully made. We must likewise give our entire approval to the public, associated exertions, which persons united in the profession of the same views of religion are accustomed to make, for the spread of their particular doctrines in the world. In such proceedings, conducted in a spirit of moderation and charity, we can see nothing but natural, earnest endeavours, to make known what the respective parties consider to be valuable truths. It is surely every man's duty to make such exertions ; as thereby he may hope to benefit his fellow creatures. And if he meet with others entertaining the same views with himself,—willing to employ the same means to the same ends, as he himself desires—why should he not associate with them, that they may have the advantage of combined efforts and resources ? Such steps are commonly taken, in reference to all other things which deeply engage the thoughts and feelings of men. Why should they not be adopted in reference to the most important of all human concerns,—religion ?

Thus far, therefore, we avow ourselves sectarians. In sectarianism, thus far considered, we can see nothing wrong. We cannot join in the contempt, with which some people affect to treat the present sub-divisions of the Christian world into numerous sects and parties, each zealous for the maintenance and diffusion of their particular tenets. This seems to us to be the natural, proper state of things, so long as our present real differences of knowledge and opinion continue. That it will accomplish its own removal, in time, we have no hesitation in believing ;—but in order to effect this, it must be left alone. No attempt must be made to check it, or bring it to an end, prematurely. Nothing must be done to create a heartless indifference to right and particular views of religious truth ; or to produce a mere outward and deceitful

uniformity of profession. The more men are led to regard our present sectarian divisions as the natural, unavoidable result of our present imperfect knowledge of sacred subjects, the more likely are they to see the gross absurdity, the injustice, of thinking the least ill of one another because they belong to different sects.

By *sectarianism*, however, when it is spoken of with condemnation, must generally be understood the bad spirit,—the mean, jealous, presumptuous, bigoted, uncharitable feelings,—which too often arise out of this divided state of the Christian world. In this sense we heartily join in the cry against it. We would gladly give all the help in our power to complete its destruction. It is the bane of social intercourse, and of all general harmony and improvement among Christians. In the bosoms of some men, this spirit amounts to a proud and haughty scorn, or to a mean and grovelling dislike, of all who think otherwise than they do on the most controverted points of religion. Wherever the sectarian spirit exists in this degree, it deserves the mingled pity and indignation of every enlightened Christian. But in the bosoms of all of us, perhaps, there occasionally exists a narrow, unworthy feeling of disrespect, towards those who belong to sects directly and zealously opposed to our own. We aim at no particular parties in making these observations; we mean to exempt no particular party. Let members of our own sect—let Unitarians—take the admonition to themselves, as freely as they would apply it to their opponents. Our own principle, at all events, is a plain and unqualified one. We make no reserve. We cleave to no exceptions. We say that no man on earth is to be thought the better or the worse of, for the sect to which he belongs,—nor even if he belongs to no sect. Is he upright, virtuous, benevolent and good? Is he *sound in character*? If we believe him to be so, then, in order to determine whether we should love and esteem him, we have as little right to inquire what sectarian opinions he may hold, as what may be his stature or his complexion. We heed nothing at all about this being called a *spurious kind of liberality*—a false and *delusive charity*. We know it is no such thing. We know it is the dictate of reason and justice, the proper spirit of the holy, beneficent Christian religion. We consider

ourselves to be speaking in our rightful character, as the "Gospel Advocate," whilst we maintain these sentiments. We are resolved never to swerve from them in principle and profession. We pray God we may never forget them in any one moment's feeling of our hearts.

It will give us satisfaction, if these remarks on sectarianism be regarded as a sort of exposition of the *spirit* in which this work is to be conducted. Since the publication of our first number, we have been told by some, of whose approbation we are desirous, that our pages rather disappointed them in being of a character *too sectarian*. If it be meant, that we appear as the advocates of particular religious doctrines and principles, we plead, that this we always intended and avowed from the beginning. We could not conscientiously devote our time to the conduct of this publication on any other conditions. We can truly say, however, that we advocate these doctrines,—not because they are called Unitarian,—not because they happen to be the leading principles of the sect to which we are attached,—but because we are fully persuaded that they are the most rational, scriptural, just and enlightened views of religion, which the human mind can embrace. If, therefore, to make the defence of these principles a leading object of our pages, be to shew a sectarian character, we fear we must continue subject to the charge. But, on any other grounds, we do not believe that we have yet laid, or shall lay ourselves open to censure. The narrow, vile spirit of sectarianism, shall never pollute our pages, if we can avoid it. We care as little for what may bear the name of Unitarian, as for what may be called orthodox,—except so far as it appears to us to be true and good, agreeable to reason and divine revelation, glorious to God and beneficial to man. At the same time, it would surely have been a most vain system to go upon, to have attempted to conceal, or to introduce in any way insidiously, that which from the commencement was the principal design and object of this publication,—the advocacy of what we deem a rational and pure theology. If in doing this, we betray any sectarianism, in the bad sense of the word, on our own heads do we now invoke all merited reprobation.



## SONG OF NATURE.

Deo Opt. Max.

Spirit, whom gods adore  
 For evermore,  
 To Thee their brows of light the Glorious bow!  
 The archangel's wings might trace  
 Eternity and Space,  
 Nor find a spot to whisper, ' Where art Thou ?'

Infinitude is Thine,  
 Each star a shrine,  
 Where pilgrim-seraphs fold their wings and praise;  
 Where the Undying dwell,  
 Striking the golden shell  
 To strains it asks not *life* alone to raise.

Touch but the mighty string,  
 And what frail thing  
 Could brook the deep cherubic thunder's roll—  
 Could hear, and not expire,  
 The glory-thrilling lyre,  
 Whose pulse would shake the adamantine pole ?

If such but *one* proud song,  
 What the full throng  
 Of praise from yon Abyss of Worlds must be !  
 What the whole choral hymn  
 Of star-born seraphim,  
 Filling all Space, yet heard alone by Thee !

And what, all these above,  
 Thy power and love,  
 Whom the most glorious darkly glorify—  
 To whom seraphs and spheres,  
 Through everlasting years,  
 Speak but the limits of infinity !

Should dust then not retire  
 From the high lyre,  
 Sacred to Thee, yet powerless of Thy praise—  
 Nor touch one solemn chord  
 To the great Spirit-Lord  
 Who lights the stars even with His crown's loose rays ?



No ! for were none to sing,  
But those who string  
A harp all-worthy of the Highest One,  
The spheres would silent be,  
And the full harmony  
Were dumb for aye around the Sapphire Throne.

Therefore, we lift our voice,  
With song rejoice,  
Touch the divine harp with a mortal hand,  
And shed through shadows dim  
Our glow-worm praise to Him,  
Whose Glory-bow the Cloud of Chaos spann'd.

Onward—still on—above,  
Yon Sea of Love  
Spreads strange blue Deeps and opes new golden Bowers.  
The empyrean Tree,  
Lit but unscorch'd by Thee,  
Buds into worlds, with Paradise's flowers.

Even on the sapphire robe,  
Cast round our globe,  
How rich the weavings of the Hand Divine !  
How throned the living orbs !  
How thought all praise absorbs !  
What can we say but, ' These, Oh God, are Thine ?'

A thousand stars—each one  
A kingly sun,  
With his bright court of planets round his throne—  
While from these in their turns  
Moons fill their diamond urns,  
And rapid comets twine all orbs in one !

Could we but shame Thy might,  
If what the night  
Revealeth to our gaze of distant spheres  
In nought excell'd our own—  
If this, our system's sun,  
Equall'd the brightest of his bright compeers ?

Yet there are worlds our dreams  
Reach not, whose beams  
Obscure, O Sun, the splendours of thy brow ;  
To which thy light is dark,  
Or, as the dew-drop spark  
Is to thyself, even such to them art thou.

Majestic Wonder ! still  
With awe we thrill,  
When we behold thee in thy pomp and pride,  
At thy rich morning hour,  
Or in thy noontide power,  
Or in thy splendid peace of evening-tide.

And when, around thee hurl'd,  
We see each world  
With all its pendent moons revolving shine,  
How does their silence tell  
From Nature's oracle,  
Of Him who launch'd them with His arm divine !

In vain our thoughts may try  
To wing the sky,  
From where with his pale rings dim Saturn rolls,  
To where young Mercury hath  
His everlasting path,  
His virgin light, and never-frozen poles.

Yet o'er this system vast  
Thy chain is cast,  
Invisible, infrangible, divine,  
Binding the whole in one  
Around the central Sun,  
Giving them speed to roll and light to shine.

Glory to Thee, sole God,  
Even from the sod  
Of this dim world, for ever still shall rise—  
Glory, from this green star,  
To the cerulean bar,  
Which bounds our sight and circumscribes our skies !

Thou spak'st—and they were made !  
    NOTHING obey'd  
Thy voice, and gave forth worlds by beings trod ;  
    Thy touch lit up the sun,  
    And sped the planets on,  
Where still the burning prophets praise their God.

And when from these we turn  
    To the full urn  
Of beauty streaming o'er our own dear Earth,  
    How rise our souls to Thee,  
    The Leafer of the tree,  
The Filler of the grasshopper with mirth !

Through Thee, in sunny Spring,  
    The fresh woods ring  
With all their strains of happy melody ;  
    And the young beech-bough's shade,  
    Like leaves of sunshine made,  
Wavers across, but scarce excludes the sky.

Oh young and yellow woods,  
    Your solitudes  
Are full of Him in all their leafy bloom ;  
    And, when with Summer dark,  
    Rich gleams on branch and bark  
Etch forth His name upon the glorious gloom.

When Autumn comes, and all  
    Wears a bright pall,  
As if the hues of Summer's vanish'd flowers  
    Had misted up on high,  
    To haunt your foliage dry  
With spirit-colours from departed hours—

Then, whispering glooms, we feel  
    His presence steal  
Upon us, musing through your evening aisles,  
    What time the parting sun,  
    Through trunks and branches dun,  
Sheds tender light, like one who sighs and smiles.

*(To be Concluded in the next Number)*

## VALUE OF PRACTICAL RELIGION.

FEW, if any, who have seriously reflected upon what Christianity enjoins, or have humbly yet faithfully observed its precepts, can have failed to acknowledge the very great advantages which we daily enjoy, and are capable of enjoying, from the *practice* of true religion. The individual, as well as the community to which he belongs, derives from this source a great portion of positive good. And the more extensive and sincere his obedience to moral principles, the greater will be his possession of mental peace, and his enjoyment of life.

Some may designate our observation the cant of religion, and deem it of little worth. But let not their prejudice carry them too far in this, as in other matters. It is no detraction from the soundness as value of particular maxims that they are frequently repeated, and that, too, by men of a certain class. Though some characters may happen to be the subjects of this man's ridicule, or of that man's scorn, they may nevertheless possess qualities which are most excellent, and be silently effecting great things in some branch of human happiness. Take for instance, *practical religion*. What benefits is it conferring upon all orders of society, by its rules of moral conduct, of temperance, integrity, and benevolence? What comforts does it provide for the poor, as well as rich, by the check which it gives to all violent passions, and the infinitely improved character which it has imparted to the exercise of filial and parental virtues. What believer does not experience its assistance under the trials of life? What individual does not look upon the fair face of creation with a higher thought and purer devotion, when he carries with him the sentiments of true religion? Every part of this vast globe pours into his heart its stores of moral and spiritual gratification. Not an insect is there which flies, that does not reflect from its tiny wing beauties which move the soul to gratitude and praise. Trace religion in the several walks of active duty, and, it will, we feel persuaded, be admitted to be a false assertion, that all recommendations of personal piety, are little if any thing else than cant,—irrelevant both in theory and practice to our true interests. This doctrine is certainly

false. It is contradicted by innumerable facts. It is wisdom to reject it, and to acquire that better disposition which seeks both to know and do what God and Christ have commanded. Others again will say, all this is true, but where is the good of increased exertions in the cause of religion? Why press upon us the necessity of greater attention than we have hitherto shewn to it. We reply, that religious blessings may be more extended than they are at present; that the influence of a pure morality may be felt in every condition and duty of life; that the good may be better and enjoy a proportionate happiness. We want to feel ourselves animated every moment with the holy principles of revelation; to find the spirit of true and enlightened devotion around and within us, the life and energy of the whole character. There is a spacious field for moral and spiritual cultivation; we wish to see that field strewn with seeds, and bearing a rich harvest. The blessings of religion shall appear most and be best known, when religion as a beloved parent possesses the affections and duty of all its children. And it is that the sorrows and privations of the poor and oppressed may be lessened; it is that the comparative ease and quiet of the rich may bear to them other and greater comforts; it is that all the relations in which man stands to man may be productive of every possible good, that we desire to see in all parties a faithful observance of the laws of God. Those laws are large and comprehensive in their character, their purpose is divine, and their effects are blessed. But it is our object, even as it is our interest, to possess more of the power and spirit of Christianity. In urging this point upon the attention of Christians, we feel confident both of our own disinterested affection for them, and of the safety of the rule which we prescribe.

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#### THE CHURCH AND THE QUARTERLY REVIEW.

THE "Quarterly" for April last contains an article on the Church, the particular object of which is to fix the attention of the Landlords of England and Ireland on the danger threatening the establishment, and to awaken them by various considerations, principally those of self-interest, to its resolute defence. To this mode of proceed-

ing we make no objection. If the Church, as the writer asserts, preserves to the Landlords the cordial allegiance of their tenants; if the Clergy reconcile the two parties, and promote a good understanding between them, and Landlords seek through their instrumentality contented tenants and well-paid rents, we do not quarrel with them; nor should we have noticed the paper alluded to, did it not contain some strictures upon Dissent and Dissenters, conceived neither in the spirit of liberality nor justice. Of these we complain—and we have a right to be heard.

The Reviewer asserts that Dissenters are indebted to the Church even for their existence—"they, unconsciously derive the means of their own continuance from the continuance of an establishment which, from their blindness, they would pull down." In one sense only is he correct. Whilst there is an established Church, they must of necessity remain Dissenters. Dissatisfied with its doctrines because they do not harmonize with the divine teachings—with its hierarchy because they have been taught to call no man Master and Lord—with its assumption of peculiar privileges, because these should be common to the Church of Christ, and not appropriated by a single sect or party; their expression of the Church's authority or consistency, can never be that of cordial *assent*. But they owe their existence and continuance to their own principles—to their deep conviction of the injury religion suffers when it is moulded into a political establishment, to their supreme veneration for the Scriptures as the rule of faith and duty, and a paramount regard for Christian liberty. Let religion be free, (and it ought to be free as the air we breathe,) and that holy spirit by which Dissenters are actuated will still be vital, though they should lose their distinctive appellation.

"The Articles" our Reviewer proceeds, "the Liturgy, the great divines of the Church, though they profess no obligation to such things, afford them a gauge for their own opinions, and save them from running riot." It is not so. If the gauge were used, the object is not answered, Witness the Southcotian delusion, which unsettled the minds of thousands, both in and out of the pale of the



Church. Witness the solemn mockery in which Edward Irving is a principal actor. Enthusiasm will always find its victims; and they are the most likely to become so, who are not conversant with a rational faith. But we had always imagined that the Dissenters sought a higher gauge for their opinions than the Church supplies—the Bible. There they seek the faith once delivered to the saints; there, the hope which maketh not ashamed. If they do not “run riot” it is because the pure word of God enlightens their minds, guides their decisions, and prevents their being carried away by every wind of doctrine. To this standard they make their first, their last appeal: in their view the authority of articles framed with the nicest human skill and the sanction of the greatest divines of any Church, fade into nothing before the supreme light and majesty of revelation.

The Reviewer next presages the degree of respect and liberality which Dissenting Ministers will receive after the Church shall have fallen:—“Congregations, no longer having before their eyes in the Clergy of the Church a standard of reference whereby to measure the point of elevation in society to which they should uphold a Minister of God, would pare him down, more and more, till he became little better than a religious mendicant.” It is the first time we have heard it insinuated that our Ministers are indebted for their respectability and influence to the Clergy of the establishment, and we are not disposed to subscribe to the doctrine of this orthodox writer of a most orthodox periodical. We are rather inclined to make a counter statement, and assert that the Dissenting Ministry is depressed by the Clergy, to whom law and fashion decree precedence; exclusive rank and consequence, which, if they belong to any, belong to all Christian teachers. But taking the elevation and influence of the dissenting ministerial body at their present amount, to what, we ask, are they owing? Is it not to the learning of that body, their integrity, and their sacred devotion to a holy cause? That the attainments of Dissenting Ministers—we have no need to except those of our own denomination—are considerable, in many cases profound, cannot be called in question. Their diligence in acquiring the knowledge which qualifies them for the office of teacher, is on all hands ac-

knowledge, and their success as instructors of youth is felt throughout society. In the choice of a profession none can charge them with worldly-mindedness; for there is little profit to lure them from the accustomed walks of life—little to compensate for the sacrifices they make at the suggestion of duty. Of their discharge of the ministerial office, it is enough to say, they have set an example which the Clergy have felt themselves obliged to imitate. There is no extravagance in the assertion that the great burden of Dissent is borne by the Ministers. They make the principal sacrifices on behalf of it; and their self-denial produces, and will produce, its proper effects. We repeat that their influence is owing to their attainments and their virtues; and when shall these cease to be appreciated? Can the overthrow of the Establishment destroy all moral feeling? Can it annihilate all esteem for the wise, the disinterested and the good? Rather than this, we should say, with the warmest partisans of the Church, *esto perpetua!* But no, whether she survive for a long period or not, the changes which are hurrying each other forward, the spread of liberal and enlightened views, the ascendancy of moral feeling, are the pledges that goodness shall win its meed of honor, and shine more brightly than rank and wealth. Nor can we believe that our congregations will ever so far forget themselves as to attempt to trample upon the rights of their Ministers. Their increasing intelligence will demand if possible increased knowledge, ability, and zeal, on the part of their Ministers; and it would be gross injustice to suspect that they can ever desire to receive the services of such men, without endeavouring to make an adequate return. They will not forget that “the labourer is worthy of his hire,” nor cease to esteem him very highly in love for his work’s sake. But should they ever act in accordance with the spirit prognosticated of them, he will have too much respect for himself and his sacred office, too much nobility of spirit, to become their mercenary dependant and slave.

Another remark of the Reviewer is, that the clergyman educates the Sunday-scholars and makes them loyal and liberal! He condescends to be facetious. He is *homo aptus ad jocandum*. Loyal and liberal, forsooth! Dr.

Johnson tells us that *loyalty* is "firm and faithful adherence to a prince"—*liberality*, "munificence, bounty, generosity, generous profession." If the characters of the Sunday-scholars are thus formed, they must present a beautiful contrast to those of the dignified heads of the Church, who choose to distinguish themselves, and not for the first time, by placing the most powerful obstacles they can accumulate in the way of liberality. It matters not whether a prince or his subjects encourage the growth of enlightened feeling, and kindle the flame of civil and religious freedom; it is no slander to state, that the Clergy are among the last to nourish the one or fan the other. Are they sincere, warm-hearted friends, to the universal education of the people? When they have engaged in this godlike work, has it been as the *primum mobile*? the chief actors? and from a deep persuasion of the importance and value of it? Let their actions give an answer; and these will reply, that the Dissenters have taken the lead; that the Dissenters have been earnest in spreading the blessings of education, whilst odium and ill-will have pursued them; and that the friends of the establishment only moved with the stream when they found it impossible by any means to throw back its mighty strength. From their adoption of Sunday Schools, to their publication of the Saturday's Magazine, this has been the order and spirit of their proceedings. They have ceded the place of honor and usefulness to Dissent, and then said, but with an ill-grace, "Lead on, I follow thee"

But the Church "maintains order; this is its offence and not to be forgiven, and it must fall—*delendu est Carthago*." The Reviewer prepares himself, another Marius, to mourn amidst its ruins. But let him conclude. "Let the friends of order learn this lesson from its foes; conclude that what is worth an assault so furious is worth a defence as obstinate, and the Church is safe." To us it appears that it must seek its safety by other means. Was it the will of a despotic prince, or public opinion, that despoiled Popery of its churches, cathedrals and revenues, and bestowed them upon Episcopacy. And may nothing "blot out" the prescriptive charter by which she holds them? Public opinion, like the resistless waves of the

ocean, carries all before it. That opinion is setting against the Church, still more and more, not only amongst Dissenters, whom the Quarterly considers its natural enemies, but even within the establishment itself. There may be found many, whose eyes are open to the necessity of introducing such improvements as will harmonize with the spirit of the times. The Church must extend and liberalize her communion, and apply her vast income to its legitimate objects. She will find her interest and safety, not in madly resisting every effort at improvement, but in conceding to the wishes of her best friends, and becoming, like her Sunday scholars, "loyal and liberal." Her safety is threatened even by the parties within her pale, for one whom she reveres has said, *A house divided against itself cannot stand.*

For ourselves, we deny that we are *enemies* of the Church, and we indignantly repel the imputation that its love of order is an *offence* to us. Our objections to the Church of England are more in keeping with the character of a good citizen. We find in the Scriptures no warrant for the political establishment of a sect or party, no language resembling its creed, no licence for damning those who reject it. These are the first, the weightiest reasons for our non-communion with her; but let it not be said that we have no regard for her. We are not devoid of the reverence due to ancient religious institutions. We love to see the village tower rising amid the trees, and to hear the village chime calling the hamlet to worship. To us there is a charm in the

high-embowed roof

With antique pillars massy proof

And storied windows richly dight;—

Our soul is subdued by "the dim religious light," or warmed to rapture by the "pealing organ." The splendid piles which ancient genius founded, and piety consecrated to God, wake in our breasts admiration and awe. But who admires the dust and cobweb which disfigure these noble edifices? Neither can we admire and reverence the Church of England as a whole, because we are not blind to the merit of her institutions, her buildings and her hierarchy. But if she fall she will not fall unmourned, unhonored. We shall not be among the first to rejoice at her ruin.

W.

## GOSPEL ADVOCACY.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

## LETTER II.

THE doctrine of the Divine Unity relieves the worshipper of much that is calculated to make fearful impressions upon the mind. It not only frees his system of belief from many particulars that are totally irreconcilable with reason, and which consequently tend to beget and diffuse infidelity; it not only does away with the necessity of subscribing to the odd rule of faith laid down by a certain "father in God"—to believe a thing because it is impossible—which is relieving a person from no small difficulty; but it releases him from the influence of a creed that is calculated to lessen his reverence, gratitude and love, for the "Father Almighty." For although in the popular faith, He is acknowledged and worshipped as our Creator, he cannot, consistently with certain of its articles, be regarded as our Saviour, nor venerated as our Sanctifier; for the offices of Saviour and Sanctifier are, notwithstanding any assertions to the contrary, plainly attributed to two other distinct beings. Creation is, indeed, according to that faith, to a fearfully great number, a curse and not a blessing; and in the uncertainty respecting whom irremediable perdition may fall upon, it is not a thing to be very grateful for: at least the apprehension of such a result of the creation of rational beings, together with the anxiety naturally attending it, must produce in the minds of even the best men very undesirable feelings and impressions, when considering the dispensations of God. Although, in the popular faith, God is designated our Father, still when the particulars of that faith are set forth in their "orthodox" character, they may be said to belong to any thing but a Fatherly dispensation; for no good father would decree the happiness of a few of his offspring, and the perdition of the remainder; but would provide means, as, indeed the Gospel declares that God has done, for the final salvation of all men, through the power and operation of truth. Although in the popular system of faith, God is said to save us by grace, yet when this grace receives an "orthodox" interpretation, it is plainly not the grace of the Gospel; for the one is paid for, and the other is free: the grace of the popular system is a matter of



contract and bargain, of exchange and equivalency, and therefore not a thing to excite that deep gratitude and perfect love, which are due to our Father in heaven, and which Christ's disciples are exhorted to cherish.

I have said, in my former letter, that the Unity and Paternity of God are the foundation upon which the Gospel rests. Every doctrine inconsistent with the scriptural declaration, "God is One," is incompatible with that of the paternity, because it involves others that do not agree with the character of the Divine Being as a Father. Especially is the popular view of a Trinity incompatible with any such character. Doubtless, under the Trinitarian system of faith men are taught to address God as their Father; but herein this faith is inconsistent with itself. The Scripture says, speaking in the name of the Most High, "If I be a Father, where is mine honour"—where are the reverence and obedience that are due to a father? Reverently be it spoken, but if the popular view of the Divine dispensations be correct, it may justly be asked, if God is our Father, where are the testimonies and pledges of a Father's love? Are they shown in propounding to his reasonable creatures, as a faith unto salvation, unreasonable doctrines? Are they shown in a displeasure towards them, unappeaseable, but by the satisfaction and the sacrifice set forth in what is designated the doctrine of the atonement? Are they shown in a dispensation which is founded upon election and reprobation? or in the never-ending punishment of any of his creatures? Certainly not: and in as much as the popular system admits these and other doctrines of a nature incompatible with the paternal character of God, therefore it cannot be the faith according to the gospel, in other words, the good news communicated to us from the Father of mercies and God of all grace through Jesus Christ. Happily, the blessed truth, that God is our Father, furnishes us with an infallible test, whereby we may ascertain the correctness or falsehood of every thing propounded to us as a doctrine of the gospel; for nothing incompatible with the paternal character can be an article of that faith which expressly teaches that God is one—that God is our Father—that God is love. Yes, the revelation in the gospel of the



divine Being as our Father, stands therein a monument of the everlasting love of God for us; appears therein as a test, whereby we may try every other doctrine of religion; and as a pledge to us, that, what dispensations soever he may submit us to, or howsoever he may dispose of us, still, all his dealings with the children of men must be intended for their spiritual education, their correction, their gradual improvement, in fact, the ultimate righteousness and happiness of all his intelligent creatures. God grant that the time may speedily come, when all men shall embrace the truth in the love of it, and habitually practice it, as worthy children of Him who is true! C.

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#### UNITARIANISM NO COLD-HEARTED HERESY.

THERE seems to be this prejudice abroad,—that a religion for the understanding cannot be also a religion for the heart. We know not how else to account for assertions and insinuations often to be met with in modern theological writings. Against those views of Christianity which are devoid of mystery, and consistent with reason, it is frequently alleged that they are cold and cheerless, that they have no power to awaken and gratify religious affections. The accusation is calculated to be a very popular one. Most men *feel* much more than they *think*, on the subject of religion. To be told, therefore, that any system of doctrines is wholly wanting in power to interest the devout affections, is to them like being told that the essence, the very soul of religion, is absent from that system. They conclude, accordingly, that rational views of religion are false and pernicious. In fact, they are right as far as their feelings are concerned, but wrong in their belief. A repetition of this stale and groundless charge against the principles we espouse, has lately fallen under our notice in the pages of a periodical work. In an article on Samuel Taylor Coleridge, it is said that the poet was once a Unitarian preacher, but “soon abandoned that pestilent and cold-hearted heresy.”\* This is quite in the present favourite style of vituperation against the simplicity of divine truth. The attempt to support orthodoxy by reasoning, or even by scripture, is growing desperate. Its defenders think to supply it with another prop, by appeal-

\* See Fraser's Magazine for July.

ing in its favour to the *sentimentality* of the age. To believe in one God the Father, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,—may be very reasonable, and very consistent with the doctrine of the Apostle Paul,—but it is “a *cold-hearted* heresy.” All the genial warmth of religion, we suppose, arises from believing that three divine persons are one God; that the infinite and unchangeable Jehovah expired on the cross; and that the guilt of the world has been washed away in the blood of suffering innocence? Or, perhaps, it is the doctrine of everlasting torments which supplies all the vital heat of the orthodox system? It is so long since we were relieved, (thank God,) from the miseries of its influence, that we almost forget in what parts its calorific powers specially reside. We know, however, that these, and other such absurdities and horrors of the system, are the only parts against which we now protest. We know that all which, in any view of Christianity, is calculated to raise high and holy admiration; to enkindle fervent gratitude and devout love; to inspire the heart with blissful faith and rapturous hope; to awaken in the soul universal benevolence to men, and filial piety to God;—all this we retain and cherish. The accusation against our doctrines of being *cold-hearted*, therefore, is preposterous. We cannot help saying, that to our minds it seems almost profane. Ignorance is to be pitied; but such confidence in declaring the inefficiency of the most sacred truths to move the soul, because they are not mingled with human dogmas, deserves some rebuke. We can assure all who have imbibed this prejudice, that they are under a melancholy delusion. *Unitarian Christianity*,—which is simply the name that prevalent corruptions oblige us to use at present for the genuine gospel,—if embraced with a strong and sincere faith, is pre-eminently the religion of the heart. In the character, ways and designs, which it ascribes to God,—in the representations which it gives of “the mind which was in Christ Jesus,” and of all the circumstances of his life and death, his resurrection and ascension,—in all the solemn truths and sanctifying promises, “the means of grace and hopes of glory,” which it holds out to the faithful,—it is adapted to kindle in the bosoms of men emotions as ardent as they are pure, as full of a steady and genial

warmth, as they are free from the grossness and violence of feeling which the popular errors too often create.

Will any man give us a *reason*, why the contrary of this should be supposed? Why should rational views of Christianity be thought destitute of power to move and interest the affections? Does it absolutely require the mystery, the perplexity, the wonder-raising and terror-striking dogmas, of the popular creed, to affect a mind at all disposed to cherish pure and rational piety?

The leading points on which we differ from orthodox Christians, respect the personal *Unity* of God's nature, and the strict *Paternity* of his character and ways. We believe that he is One, to the exclusion of all personal divisions, and all vain distinctions of whatever kind. We believe that he is a Father, and acts eternally as a Father, to all his intelligent creatures. Are these mean and *cold* thoughts of God? Far otherwise do they appear in our eyes. The impression they leave on the mind is simple, unbroken, satisfying; it is that of one only God, one divine Intelligence, one undivided and unrivalled Being, of infinite and unchanging goodness! The human soul, though subdued and humbled by a conscious sense of its own comparative littleness, feels itself enlarged and lifted up to the region of high thoughts and sublime sensations, by the very conception of such a Being. We cannot but perceive a simplicity in it which greatly delights the understanding—combined, however, with an energy and beauty that overwhelm the heart with a flow of deep and glowing emotions. Our moral and intellectual faculties together sink prostrate before the majesty of its presence in the soul; but again are exalted and sustained by the glorious, gracious views, which it inspires. The mind will contain no more; nor could it be satisfied with less. Whatever comes short of this leaves an unoccupied void in the sanctuary of the inward man; whatever goes beyond it, creates a painful sense of perplexity and confusion. Trinitarian Christians also profess to hold the same truths,—that God is one, and that he is a Father to all mankind. But as it seems to us, and as some of the most pious members of their persuasion have acknowledged from experience, they hold

these truths in connection with other tenets, which greatly interfere with and impede their operation on the heart. We, on the contrary, have no such opposing influences in our creed. We hold the doctrines of the Divine Unity and Divine Paternity uncorrupted,—and thus enable them to act with all their native, undissipated energy, on our affections of reverence, admiration, gratitude and love! Why, then, should it be thought that ours is a *cold-hearted* religion?

It cannot be, (as some imagine,) that our views of the *person*, of the *nature*, of Christ, have really any chilling influence. Whatever of true and proper deity, whatever of divine perfection, the orthodox system ascribes to Jesus, we of course ascribe to the only true God, the Father. Nothing is lost by us, therefore, as far as relates to presenting the mind with fit objects for the excitement of devout affection. Unless Trinitarians mean boldly to contend that they enjoy an advantage, in having three objects of supreme affection instead of one! We have one infinitely compassionate Being, to love with all the heart, with all the mind, and with all the soul. Can they have more? It is likewise to be observed, that our views of the person of Christ enable us, as we think, to understand more clearly, to appreciate more justly, to feel more strongly, the glorious example of all moral goodness which Jesus exhibited as *a man*, sanctified and devoted unto God. According to our faith, Jesus is not the same object of affection as God, as the Father. He is a new object, and in some respects, perhaps, one even more immediately adapted to call forth the warmest feelings and sympathies of the heart. We see in him one of our own race, carried by his unutterable love and compassion for men, by the wonderful strength of his piety and benevolence, through suffering, shame and death, for our salvation. Believing in such a Saviour, therefore,—as well as in one all-merciful and ever-blessed God, his Father,—why should it be thought that ours is a *cold-hearted* religion?

Neither is there any want of power to move and affect the heart, in the views we entertain of sin, and of the

original state of human nature. Who ought to be most deeply smitten with grief and penitence for sin? Who ought to be most humbly and devoutly grateful for deliverance from this evil? Is it he, who believes that he was born with a nature inevitably sinful? or he who believes that having been made upright, and sent into the world in a state of innocence, he has impiously corrupted his own ways before God? Who,—if he will but follow unchecked the native impulses of the heart,—must fall down with the bitterest compunction of spirit before the throne of divine grace? And who, when at length a sense of pardoning mercy flows through his soul, like refreshing waters through a parched land, must rise up from his prostrate condition with sentiments of the liveliest and warmest gratitude to Him who *forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin*? We appeal to common sense, to common feeling. We protest that the religion which makes sin consist of actual and personal guilt,—the religion which ascribes the forgiveness of sin, on repentance, entirely to the free and unmerited grace of God,—whatever else it may be, is not a *cold-hearted heresy*.

In the last place, can it be necessary to vindicate our opinions from this charge, in what relates to our views of the final condition of all mankind, as the rational and moral creatures of God? We reject, as devoid of all sound scriptural proof, the monstrous doctrine of eternal torments. We believe that, however awful may be the retribution to which the wicked shall be subjected, the mercies of God cannot *be clean gone for ever*. We believe that, under the government of a perfectly wise and good Parent, all things must work together for good;—first to such as already love God, and listen to his merciful invitations in the gospel;—but ultimately to all whom he hath created in his own image, all to whom he has imparted the gift of a rational and spiritual nature. Are these the *cold-hearted* tenets of our heresy? In every view of the subject, this accusation is frivolous and vexatious. In those rational views of Christianity, at present called Unitarian, there is no lack of power to move and warm the heart of any sincere believer, whether his natural temperament be excitable or phlegmatic, fresh and lively as the gushing fountain, or dry as summer dust.



## THE SCRIPTURE INTERPRETER, No. II.

*Matthew, 3, v. 17.*

IN a truly evangelical point of view, this is a very important passage of Scripture; as it records what was probably the first heavenly announcement and recognition of Jesus of Nazareth in his divine character, as the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. In a controversial point of view, as bearing on the question concerning the nature of Christ, this passage cannot be considered, in itself alone, of much weight. But as it happens to afford the first instance of the title "Son of God" being given to Jesus, it presents an opportunity for discussing the scriptural meaning of that title.

Let the plain reader keep in mind, then, that no question is raised, whether or not Jesus is properly styled the "Son of God:"—all admit that he is justly so designated.

The only inquiry that is necessary, therefore, relates to the proper, scriptural *meaning* of this title. Was it intended to refer to the divine nature of our Saviour's person? or only to the divine character of his office, as the Messiah, the holy and beloved Messenger of God to the world?

The first may be fairly called the vulgar interpretation of the title. It is adopted by the generality of persons embracing the popular faith, without much thought or reflection. It is notorious, however, that many learned and judicious men of the orthodox persuasion, though still holding to their opinion concerning the Deity of Christ on other grounds, have conceded to Unitarians that *this title* was given to Jesus in reference to his office, and not to his nature. But the multitude of Trinitarian believers keep fast to their erroneous notions on this subject. They can see no difference between "Son of God," and "God the Son." We are not aware, however, of the slightest ground for maintaining, that the scriptures themselves give any countenance to this mode of interpreting the phrase in question. But surely it is most rash and unwarrantable conduct in Christians, to *force* such a meaning on the title, to *infer* such a meaning from it, without the express authority of the inspired writers? Is there any

thing in it much adapted to recommend it to the favour of a rational and pious mind? In the notion that God, the Infinite and Invisible Spirit, has a Son, *in respect to nature*, who has proceeded from Him and is His own equal, is there any thing calculated to purify, to refine and elevate our conceptions of the Divine Being? Has not this doctrine, in fact, led to speculations about “eternal generation” and “emanation,” “created,” “begotten,” and “made,” which, in reference to the nature of God, are both foolish and impious?

The rashness and absurdity of the orthodox interpretation, in this case, become yet more evident when we consider that the very same designation is given in scripture to various other persons, (both previous and subsequent to its appropriation to Christ,) solely on account of some qualities of character, or some favours and dignities bestowed on them by God. For, certainly, it is most unreasonable to imagine that a name was given to Jesus, in order to declare his possession of Divine nature—when the same name has been given to so many other individuals, but uniformly for a different purpose; not to describe any peculiarity of nature in them, but simply in reference to certain moral qualities and privileges. This, supposing the truth of the Trinitarian doctrine, would be the surest way to mislead believers, but the strangest of all methods whereby to instruct and enlighten them. The fact, however, is undeniable. This name was given to the Israelites, as being the chosen people of God. “It shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are *the sons of the living God*.” (Hosea i. v. 10.) The same name is bestowed on Christian believers, and in a similar sense. “As many as received him,” says the Evangelist John, “to them gave he power to become *the sons of God* ;” and in his first Epistle he says, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called *the sons of God* .” (John i. v. 12. 1 John, iii, v. 1.) The Apostle Paul says—“as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the *sons of God* .” (Romans viii, v. 14.) The same title had been given to Solomon by Jehovah himself, through the prophet Nathan : “He shall build a house for *my name*, and I will stablish

the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be *my Son*." (2 Samuel vii, v. 13, 14.)

Surely, then, this title "Son of God," when given to Jesus Christ, cannot *in itself* be thought to convey the slightest intimation of his proper Deity. We are not contending that this name, when applied to our Saviour, was meant to designate precisely the same moral qualities and privileges, either in kind or degree, as in the case of its application to other men. We only contend that in this case, as in all others, it *was* used to designate moral qualities and spiritual privileges, not divinity of nature. This is the only point of controversy on the subject between ourselves and Trinitarians. We have not room here to explain the exact combination of ideas which we believe to have been attached to this title of our Saviour, in the minds of the sacred writers and teachers. We believe the precise sense attached to it was somewhat different in the minds of different persons, according to the extent and accuracy of their knowledge concerning our Lord's kingdom and office. In the minds of the Jews, it seems to have been simply equivalent to Messiah, or Christ. In the mind of Jesus himself, it of course implied all that really belonged to him in his spiritual office and character. In the minds of his apostles and disciples, after his resurrection, it implied all which they then understood as belonging to him in his exalted and glorified condition. But it is sufficient for our present purpose, if we have shewn the unwarrantableness of regarding it as descriptive of his personal deity, and the grounds on which we apply it solely to his office and character, as Him whom the Father had chosen and sent. This is all that can be necessary to vindicate the Unitarian interpretation of this title of Christ.

## "THE BRIDGEWATER TREATISES."

WE believe that a comprehensive acquaintance with the grand and simple truths of Natural Theology, and habits of meditation on these truths, are strongly conducive to the adoption of rational and correct views of *revealed*

religion. It is almost impossible it should be otherwise. The mind cannot easily turn from the contemplation of God in nature, as One Perfect Intelligence, all-wise and all-bountiful, to regard him as a Trinity of persons, creating myriads of rational beings with the foreknowledge of their inevitable and eternal misery. Many facts might be quoted to confirm this supposition, and to prove that the most eminent cultivators of Natural Theology have been among the most liberal and enlightened interpreters of Christianity. Paley in the last generation, and Crombie in the present, we suspect, are not to be reckoned among the most *orthodox* divines that ever lived.

On special as well as on general grounds, therefore, we hail the appearance of a series of very valuable publications on Natural Theology, under the title of the "Bridgewater Treatises;" and would strongly recommend them to the perusal of all who can procure a sight of them. The circumstances which gave occasion to the composition of these works are interesting, and may not be known to all our readers.

"The late RIGHT HONOURABLE and REVEREND FRANCIS HENRY, EARL OF BRIDGEWATER, by his last Will and Testament, directed certain Trustees therein named to invest in the public funds the sum of eight thousand pounds sterling, to be held at the disposal of the President, for the time being, of the Royal Society of London, the dividends thereon to be paid to the person or persons nominated by him to write, print, and publish one thousand copies of a work *On the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, as manifested in the Creation.*"—Under the authority entrusted to him by this will, the late President of the Royal Society, Davies Gilbert, Esq. appointed the following eminent men to write works of this description, on various subjects respectively assigned to them:—The Rev. Thomas Chalmers, D.D.; John Kidd, M.D. F.R.S.; the Rev. W. Whewell, M.A. F.R.S.; Sir Charles Bell, K.H. F.R.S.; Peter Mark Roget, M.D.; the Rev. W. Buckland, D.D. F.R.S.; the Rev. W. Kirby, M.A. F.R.S.; William Prout, M.D. F.R.S. Several of these Treatises have already appeared, and others will be published immediately. Without attempting any review of these books,

we shall probably notice most of them, and give now and then an extract for the gratification of our readers.

The REV. W. WHEWELL is an eminent Mathematician and Philosopher of Cambridge, and his work is on "Astronomy and General Physics, considered in reference to Natural Theology." We give an extract from the chapter "On Man's Place in the Universe," which appears to us to unfold a beautiful and conclusive argument in favour of a Divine Moral Government:—

"It would be strange indeed, if, while the mechanical world, the system of inert matter, is so arranged that we cannot contemplate its order without an elevated intellectual pleasure; while organized life has no faculties without their proper scope, no tendencies without their appointed object;— the rational faculties and moral tendencies of man should belong to no systematic order, should operate with no corresponding purpose; that, while the perception of sweet and bitter has its acknowledged and unmistakeable uses, the universal perception of right and wrong, the unconquerable belief of the merit of certain feelings and actions, the craving alike after moral advancement and after the means of attaining it, should exist only to delude, perplex, and disappoint man. No one with his contemplations calmed and filled and harmonized by the view of the known constitution of the universe, its machinery "wheeling unshaken" in the furthest skies and in the darkest cavern, its vital spirit breathing alike in the veins of the philosopher and the worm;—no one under the influence of such a train of contemplations, can possibly admit into his mind a persuasion which makes the moral part of our nature a collection of inconsistent and futile impressions, of idle dreams and warring opinions, each having the same claims to our acceptance. Wide as is the distance between the material and the moral world; shadowy as all reasonings necessarily are which attempt to carry the inferences of one into the other; elevated above the region of matter as all the principles and grounds of truth must be, which belong to our responsibilities and hopes; still the astronomical and natural philosopher can hardly fail to draw from their studies an imperturbable conviction that our moral nature cannot correspond to those representations according to which it has no law, coherency, or object. The mere natural reasoner may, or must, stop far short of all that it is his highest interest to know, his first duty to pursue; but even he, if he take any elevated and comprehensive views of his own subject, must escape from the opinions, as unphilosophical as they are comfortless, which would expel from our view of the world all reference to duty and moral good, all reliance on the most universal grounds of trust and hope."

"Men's belief of their duty, and of the reasons for practising it, connected as it is with the conviction of a personal relation to their Maker, and of His power of superintendence and reward, is as



manifest a fact in the moral, as any that can be pointed out is in the natural world. By the mere analogy which has been intimated, therefore, we cannot but conceive that this fact belongs in some manner or other to the order of the moral world, and of its government."

"When any one acknowledges a moral governor of the world; perceives that domestic and social relations are perpetually operating and seem intended to operate, to retain and direct men in the path of duty; and feels that the voice of conscience, the peace of heart which results from a course of virtue, and the consolations of devotion, are ever ready to assume their office as our guides and aids in the conduct of all our actions;—he will probably be willing to acknowledge also that the means of moral government are not wanting, and will no longer be oppressed or disturbed by the apprehension that the superintendence of the world may be too difficult for its Ruler, and that any of His subjects and servants may be overlooked. He will no more fear that the moral than that the physical laws of God's creation should be forgotten in any particular case: and as he knows that every sparrow which falls to the ground contains in its structure innumerable marks of the Divine care and kindness, he will be persuaded that every individual, however apparently insignificant, will have his moral being dealt with according to the laws of God's wisdom and love; will be enlightened, supported, and raised, if he use the appointed means which God's administration of the world of moral light and good offers to his use."

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

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SINCE our former publication, various measures, in which our readers are likely to feel an interest, have been under discussion in the legislature; but scarcely one can be said to have made any great progress towards completion.

On the subject of *Colonial Slavery*, the Secretary of State has brought in a Bill, which differs but little from the resolutions previously adopted by the House of Commons. The system of apprenticeships, in opposition to immediate and unqualified emancipation, is still adhered to. The only new particulars of importance, are,—1st, that the actual apprenticeship is to be preceded by an introductory period of about nine months, during which the slaves, though still slaves, are to be subject to the magistrate, and not to the master;—and, 2dly, that the duration

of the apprenticeship is to be longer or shorter, varying from seven to five years, according as the slave belongs to the class of field labourers, or of domestic servants and handicraftsmen,—the latter being considered better prepared for emancipation than their fellows. Although we rejoice greatly that the blow is at length struck, under which this terrible system of oppression must fall, we still retain all our objections to the present measure, as unreasonably harsh towards the slaves, bountiful to the proprietors, and burdensome to the country. But it is yet to be seen how the House of Commons will deal with the Bill in Committee.

*Factory System.* Nothing, as we think, could be more honourable to the national character, than the manner in which men of all parties and opinions have taken up the cause of those unfortunate children who, in such great numbers, are compelled to labour in our various *factories*. The object proposed is to regulate and limit the hours during which these helpless children may be suffered to labour, so as to preserve their health, morals and lives, from the destruction to which they are at present evidently exposed. The subject was first taken up, in the last Parliament, by Mr. Sadler. In the present Parliament it has been in the hands of Lord Ashley, who, on introducing his Bill, was met by the Government with a proposition to refer the subject again to a Select Committee. In this proposition the Ministers were defeated, and the Bill proceeded in the regular way. But in a subsequent stage, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was successful in carrying an alteration in the Bill, to the effect that the limitation of the hours of labour should apply only to children under the age of thirteen years, instead of eighteen, as proposed. This was done with a view to having *relays*, or *sets* of children, each set to work only eight hours a day. On this unfavourable decision, however, Lord Ashley immediately abandoned his Bill, resigning the business altogether into the hands of Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has engaged that a new Bill for the purpose shall be speedily introduced. We wait the settlement of this interesting affair with much anxiety. It is a clear case of justice and humanity.

*University Education without Subscription to Articles of Faith.* On the 4th of July, Mr. Tooke brought before the House of Commons his motion for an Address to the Crown in favour of granting a Charter to the London University, empowering that body to bestow *Degrees*, or learned honours, such as are procured at Oxford and Cambridge. The subject is one of great importance to all Dissenters. They are at present virtually debarred from the advantages of a perfect collegiate education, by the practice of requiring, at our Universities, that all who take degrees should subscribe to the thirty-nine articles of the established church. This was properly described by Mr. Tooke, in introducing his motion, as being "an unjust and odious monopoly." Lord Althorp acknowledged that he was so strongly attached to the principles on which the new University was founded, that if Mr. Tooke persevered in the motion for an Address, he should be obliged to support it; but he entreated that it might be withdrawn, on the assurance that the subject was already under the consideration of Government, and should not be lost sight of. This was accordingly conceded, and we hope soon to see the promise of the minister fulfilled.

*Ecclesiastical Reform.* The collision between the two Houses of Parliament, which at one time was generally expected, on the second reading of the Irish Church Reform Bill, has happily not taken place. That Bill has passed into Committee by a majority of 59. The Archbishop of Dublin, and the Bishop of London, ably supported the measure; the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of Exeter, opposed it. It is a great step to legislate at all on the subject of Ecclesiastical Reform; and therefore we heartily wish to see the Bill pass. But it is absurd to look upon it as a final measure, calculated to relieve the Irish nation at large of their grievance, in having a Church Establishment imposed on them in opposition to their faith and their wishes.

*Removal of Jewish Disabilities.* The Bill for abolishing the civil and political disabilities under which all Jews have hitherto been placed in this country, has passed the House of Commons by a large majority. We trust in our next number to hail it as the law of the land.

## INTELLIGENCE.

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THE Annual Meeting of the Southern Unitarian Tract Society, and also of the Southern Unitarian Fund Society, was held at Wareham, Dorset, on the 26th of June. The Service in the morning having been introduced by the Rev. J. B. Bristowe, of Ringwood, and the Rev. Robert Cree, of Bridport,—the Rev. Michael Maurice preached the Sermon, in his usual striking manner, from Acts ix. 31. “*Then had the Churches rest, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy spirit, were multiplied.*” From these words the Rev. Preacher took occasion to contrast the present comparative repose of the Church of Christ, with the suffering and persecution it once had to endure; and, adverting to the privileges now enjoyed by Dissenters at large, in consequence of some of their heaviest grievances being removed, urged upon his hearers the necessity of co-operating, each according to his ability, in the general “edification.” His object seemed to be, in particular, to impress upon the members of the respective congregations present, the importance of the duty of labouring with their ministers in promoting the cause of truth and righteousness, and diffusing abroad the uncorrupted doctrines of the Gospel; for that thus, alone, could “the Churches” be truly “edified,” walk in “the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and be multiplied.”

After the Morning Service, the business of the two Societies was transacted at the Chapel, the Rev. J. C. Wallace in the chair; and amongst other Resolutions, one was passed expressive of the pleasure that was felt at the prospect of the admission of the Jews to the rights and privileges of their fellow-citizens; and another, containing the thanks of the meeting to those gentlemen who were appointed as a committee to enquire into the remaining disabilities of Dissenters, and assist in their speedy and effectual removal. The grievances to which Dissenters, and Unitarian Christians in particular, are still exposed, in being compelled to contribute towards the support of an Established Church, the doctrines of which they do not believe, formed the subject of a separate Resolution.

Nearly forty gentlemen sat down to an ordinary at the Red Lion Inn, Thomas Fisher, Esq. of Dorchester, in the chair, supported by the Rev. Messrs. Maurice and Fawcett, of Yeovil,—the Rev. Edmund Kell, of Newport, Isle of Wight, acting as vice-president; and the company was profitably as well as agreeably engaged in listening to the various speeches of their respected chairman, Capt. Light, R. N., the Rev. Messrs. Maurice, Lewis, Hawkes, Kell, Wallace, Mitchelson, Cree, Bristowe, &c.

In the Evening the Service at the Chapel was introduced by the Rev. Messrs. Maurice and Mitchelson; and the Rev. H. Hawkes, of Portsmouth, preached a liberal and truly Christian sermon, from (Eph. IV, 4, 6.) “*There is one body, and one spirit,*” &c. “*One God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*”



Few meetings of the above Societies have been more fully attended, and at none was there ever more harmony or true Christian feeling displayed. Our respected brethren at Wareham, as we are informed by a gentleman present, were highly gratified at the sympathy manifested in behalf of their rising Church; for, as the chairman took occasion to observe, at the Ordinary, "few bodies of Christians, in this day, have been subject to greater difficulties, or have more successfully overcome them." Driven from the Temple in which some of them had worshipped God from their infancy, they united as one man, and resolved to manifest to the world that they were in earnest in their determination publicly to profess, and earnestly to support, the doctrines they had embraced from conviction. At first they assembled for divine worship in a room, but only till they had raised a building which would better accommodate their increasing numbers. The neighbouring ministers kindly supplied for them whenever their engagements at their own chapels would permit; and when they had to trust to their own resources, one of themselves (a gentleman whose name we only forbear to mention from a feeling of respect), set the example to his lay brethren of taking upon himself the duties of the pulpit, in addition to giving the ground, and superintending the erection of the building. Their chapel has now been several years completed; and, happily, it was never encumbered by debt. It affords to a respectable and still increasing congregation the means of worshipping in sincerity "*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*;" and it has a Sunday School and a library connected with it (as we find from the "*Unitarian Statistics*," in the *Monthly Repository*.)

We allude to the circumstances of the case for the sake of encouraging others in making similar attempts, and with the view of giving publicity to an instance of perseverance and consistency but little known, we believe. It is our earnest wish, in the words selected by one of the preachers on this occasion, that not only may they now "*have rest, and be edified*," but that, "*walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit*," they may be greatly "*multiplied*."

THE Annual General Meeting of the Devon and Cornwall Unitarian Association, was holden at Moretonhampstead, on Wednesday, July the 10th. The weather being propitious, there was a good attendance of friends from Exeter, Plymouth, Tavistock, Crediton, Honiton, Collumpton, Sidmouth, &c. Religious service was commenced at 11 o'clock, when the introductory parts, reading the scriptures and prayer, were undertaken by the Rev. T. Baker, of Sidmouth, and the Rev. J. Taplin, of Honiton. The Rev. J. Cropper, A.M. preached from Philipp. 2, v. 16. It was a sound, earnest, and extremely appropriate discourse. At the conclusion of the service, the business of the Association was transacted in the Chapel, Mr. T. White being called to preside. It appeared from the report of the Committee, that besides fulfilling the general engagements of the Association, as an auxiliary to the Society in London, a large number of Tracts, both doctrinal and practical, had been supplied to subscribers, or gratuitously distributed. Nearly forty gentlemen afterwards dined together at the White Hart Inn, Isaac Davy, Esq. of Fordton, in the Chair. The company were addressed on a variety of subjects, connected with the spread of



Christian liberty and divine truth, by the Ministers and others present. In the evening there was again religious service, when the devotions were conducted by the Rev. W. Evans, of Tavistock, and a very excellent discourse on the Fatherly character of God, was preached by the Rev. W. Odgers, of Plymouth. The day was one of pleasure and profit to all.

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THE Annual Meeting of the West of England Unitarian Society, was held at Crewkerne, on Wednesday, July 17th. The Service in the Morning was introduced by the Revs. J. B. Bristowe, of Ringwood, and Wm. James, of Bridgwater: and the Rev. R. Brook Aspland, of Bristol, delivered a very able and impressive discourse from these words of our Saviour, recorded by St. John, 18th chap. 37th v.—“To this end was I born, and for this cause came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” The business of the Association was transacted immediately after the Service, when, with other resolutions, it was determined that the discourse be printed; and the next Annual Meeting of the Society was appointed to be held at Exeter. Between forty and fifty gentlemen dined at the George Inn, Dr. Blake in the Chair, and agreeably to a proposition of Dr. Carpenter, the ladies were invited to join them after dinner. The Meeting was addressed by the Revs. J. B. Bristowe, Wm. James, R. B. Aspland, Dr. Carpenter, Walker, Fawcett, and Jenkins. Mr. Wm. Brown, and Dr. Blake. The Evening Service was introduced by the Rev. H. Hawkes, of Portsmouth, and Dr. Carpenter preached a Sermon on the objects of the death of Christ, from the 46th and 47th verses of the 24th chapter of St. Luke.

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## TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

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*All the copies of No. I. of the “Gospel Advocate” having been sold, and more demanded, that No. will be shortly reprinted, so that subscribers who may take up the work from the present or any future No. may rely on having their volumes complete at the end of the year. The communications from Birmingham are very acceptable, and we hope from time to time to receive similar favours from the same quarter. We are also obliged by the contributions of J. C. W., R. C. A., Evander, Philantrophos, and J. J., which shall appear at the earliest opportunity. The Article on Dissenting Churches had been put in types for this Number, but is reluctantly postponed for want of room.*

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# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

No. III.

SEPTEMBER, 1833.

VOL. I.

## ON FANATICISM.

IN our last number we laid before our readers a few observations on *Sectarianism*. Our design was to show that, under this name, are commonly designated some things which are not only unavoidable, but harmless, proper and beneficial,—as well as others which are unquestionably evil, and deserving of severe condemnation. The object of our remarks was to distinguish between these very different effects of sectarian divisions; and to offer some apology for the former, whilst we heartily unite with wise and liberal men of all parties in reprobation of the latter.

We shall now endeavour to follow a similar course, in submitting some brief reflections on the subject of *Fanaticism*. Protestations against the odiousness of fanaticism, against the numerous evils and disorders it occasions, are loud and frequent on the lips of many people. In general, perhaps, such protestations have their origin in laudable motives, and are not very erroneously directed. Yet it may be, as in the case of sectarianism, that either from dishonesty of purpose, or from want of sound discrimination, some persons confound good with evil, and apply the same opprobrious name of fanaticism to both. We believe it was Jeremy Bentham who, with his characteristic union of profundity and acuteness, first fully pointed out the extensive, injurious consequences, in matters of opinion and argument, arising from the ignorant or fraudulent use of what he very expressively denominates *eulogistic* and *dyslogistic* terms. *Fanaticism* is a strong dyslogistic. Being in itself a condemnatory and obnoxious name, it seems to carry with it some argument, some reason, against the reception of whatever is so denominated. This only makes it the more necessary that we should be cautious in applying this name to the sentiments and practices of our fellow Christians, as well as in judging of the propriety of its application by others.

It is not easy to say in a few words,—in the form of a definition,—what may be justly styled fanaticism. If we say it is an undue excitement of feeling on religious subjects, who shall undertake to determine the proper limits of such excitement; considering especially, that men differ as much in their natural temperament as in their adopted creeds? That which seems to be Vesuvius or Etna to one, may appear like “the frozen Caucasus” to another. If we say it is excitement arising from the influence of false and unreasonable doctrines, who shall pronounce what doctrines are to be exclusively regarded as true and reasonable, amidst the present diversities of opinion amongst men of sincere minds? If we say it is a blind, extravagant zeal for trifles, for some unimportant observance, some accidental mode or adjunct of religious profession or worship, who shall decide what are trifles, in matters which are supposed to concern the eternal salvation and happiness of human souls?

It seems difficult, then, to lay down any definitive rule, to give any exact description, by which we may in all cases infallibly distinguish between fanaticism, and true, enlightened Christian zeal. The name may be easily misapplied and abused. Men who are themselves both destitute of religious convictions, and greatly wanting in moral sensibility,—who never experience a feeling of devotion to God, or of warm, fraternal benevolence to their fellow-creatures,—whose minds have seldom or never been raised to the contemplation of divine and spiritual things,—such men may call every earnest expression of pious sentiment by the name of fanaticism, as a convenient term of reproach for that which they can neither value or understand. We are very far indeed from wishing to take part with such scorners and scoffers at religion, who treat every strong manifestation of devout feeling with contempt and ridicule. The defect is in themselves: they are dead to some of the best and happiest emotions of which the human mind is capable.

It is possible, however, for even sincere and well-disposed persons to fall into error in this respect. As we have observed already, there is a great difference in the natural temperament, in the constitutional excitability, of men's minds. This difference will shew itself in religion, as in

all other things. It may happen, that what one man thinks right, and practises, as a just display of the pious emotions of his own heart, another man, who is equally sincere, equally earnest, may regard as the fervour of over-heated passions, and condemn it as a scandal to religion. Even where the same intensity of feeling exists in the minds of two individuals, there is often the greatest difference in respect to their power and inclination to give expression to their religious feelings. Some will instantly display, cannot avoid displaying, by their words and actions, every sentiment and emotion that glows in their bosoms. Others appear to be possessed of an unconquerable habit of reluctance thus to lay open their hearts to the inspection of their fellow mortals. They rather shrink from any display of what is passing in their own minds on sacred subjects; so far at least as relates to their religious affections, their religious experience, as it is sometimes called. The loud and open declarations of religious compunction or joy, fear or confidence, sorrow or hope, to which other men have recourse almost every hour, and in almost all scenes and circumstances of life, seem to them to be exceedingly improper and unbecoming. We are persuaded that this great delicacy of mind, (if such it should be called,) this strong repugnance to all display of religious sentiment, often belongs to persons of the most sincere and ardent piety. There is, therefore, no ground of condemnation against them; as there is against those, who are for ever railing at what they call fanaticism, only because they are themselves insensible to all religion. But still we ought to be very careful, that we do not too hastily level the charge of fanaticism at men who are peculiarly constituted; whose heart is always upon their lips; who cannot help emitting, in almost every expression and gesture, some flashes of the fire that burns within their breasts.

These are the difficulties in the way of giving any precise, unerring definition, of what deserves to be called fanaticism. These are the precautions which are necessary to guard us from rashly misapplying the name ourselves, and from being led astray by its misapplication in the mouths of other people. Notwithstanding all this, there undoubtedly has been, and there is, such an evil in the world as *Fanaticism*;—and if not *infallibly*, yet *generally*,

it may be known and avoided. Nor is there any thing in this circumstance peculiar to the present subject. The same is true of most moral subjects, of most matters of opinion and sentiment. If we might venture, for the sake of illustration, to compare them to visible figures, we should say—it is hard to distinguish their outlines with clearness and precision, but easy enough to mark their leading features when these are largely developed.

For instance, though no man can say what is the exact degree to which religious feelings may be properly raised, it is nevertheless true, that fanaticism is commonly characterized by an *extravagant* excitement of these feelings. It is not so truly sentiment, as passion, which governs the ways of the fanatic. It is evident to calm observers, that his feelings have the entire mastery of his mind, exercising an unruly dominion over all his thoughts and actions; instead of having their own energy and direction subject to the controul of reason. This must be a wrong state of mind, in relation to any subject of importance; and assuredly, religion, the most important of all, can be no exception. The good desires, sentiments, and affections, of which it has pleased God to render us susceptible, were all designed to answer the most beneficial ends. They, prompt to action, contribute to happiness, and form essential parts of a thoroughly virtuous and pious character. But certainly they were not intended to be the chief arbiters of truth and falsehood, nor of right and wrong. They are not the best guides to the adoption of correct opinions; nor, always, to the practice of unblameable conduct. This is rather the office of the understanding, enlightened by knowledge, swayed by the influence of sound and sober views. But in the breast of the fanatic, this due order and harmony of the mental powers is utterly disturbed. The emotions which ought ever to be kept in subordination to reason and reflection,—the more so in consequence of the sacredness and awfulness of the objects on which they are fixed,—are suffered to riot through the soul in wild and lawless confusion. Hence, the calmness, the solemnity, the decency, which should mark all men's religious demeanour, are grossly violated in the conduct of fanatics.

It follows almost necessarily, from the circumstances which have now been mentioned, that fanaticism is usually



attended with great and deplorable weakness of judgment. The proper balance of the mental faculties cannot be thus destroyed, without producing as much of feebleness and defect in one way, as of undue activity and vehemence in another. Strength of feeling, and strength of judgment, are indeed by no means incompatible. But we suspect that over-excited, unregulated feelings, on any subject, and perfect soundness and vigour of judgment on the same subject, are totally inconsistent possessions of the mind. All violent agitations and emotions, are sure to give a most undue weight, a very partial colouring, to every fact, authority, reason, or argument, by which the convictions of the understanding may be influenced. Hence, we often find that men of clear and robust intellects, in regard to all other matters, display more than the weakness of judgment that belongs to children, on subjects concerning which they are under the dominion of fanatical feelings. It is not always indeed, that they will condescend to reason at all on these subjects. But when they do, there is a character of looseness, feebleness, and even puerility, about their reasoning, which is apt to fill an unprejudiced hearer with utter astonishment, that any minds, not altogether infantile, should be satisfied with such arguments. In short, the judgments of fanatics, as far as regards the subjects of their fanaticism, seem to be reduced to the most wretched state of blindness and weakness. They have apparently lost all power of distinguishing between *some* reason, and a *sufficient* reason, for what they think and do; between an argument in sound merely, and an argument which should have in it at least some small degree of weight and pertinency.

It is also characteristic of fanaticism, as has before been intimated, that it is usually employed upon comparative trifles. Not only in its attempts at self justification, but in its very objects, it is commonly either puerile or absurd. It is not bent upon the accomplishment of truly great things, but upon treating little things as though they were great. The zeal of the fanatic is in general out of all proportion to the ends which he has principally in view; for these are seldom of a very exalted description. The enforcement of some particular external observance, the insisting on a favourite point of discipline, the dissemination

of some speculative and mystical tenet,—is far more likely to be the immediate object of his vehement desires, than any higher and nobler purpose. It appears to us that men have seldom shown themselves fanatics in that which their posterity, or any dispassionate and impartial judges, have recognised as the cause of solid piety, of important truth, and of human improvement. These are apt to produce a more sober and rational, though not a less earnest zeal, in the bosoms of their sincere and enlightened votaries. But fanaticism, like some of the most contemptible passions of our nature, is busied with trifles, enflamed by vanities, and spends itself on puny and worthless objects.

It is a natural result of this disordered frame of mind, that wild fancies and strange delusions should possess the brain. Reason is dethroned; or the concerns of religion are taken out of her province. The imagination is let loose, to revel as it may. Hence the soul of the fanatic is beset with ideas of supernatural, special illumination, of spiritual impulses, and secret manifestations of the will of God,—all dreams, created by the heated and agitated state of his own mind. At length, perhaps, he fancies that he can even shew visible proofs of his divine inspiration; he can exhibit signs and work miracles. But it uniformly happens, that the proofs are unsatisfactory, the signs are invisible, to all but himself and his party; a tolerably clear indication of their real nature.

It is also a natural effect of this over-excitement and misdirection of certain feelings, that others, especially the more ordinary good feelings of the heart, should in a great measure be subdued and stifled. Accordingly, this will be found to be the most common result. We do, indeed, sometimes hear of *amiable* fanatics; and it is not to be expected that all the kind and generous affections, where they have before been strongly indulged, can be suddenly destroyed. But we believe that confirmed fanatics, upon a comprehensive view of their characters, are very seldom entitled to the epithet of *amiable*. Fanaticism is almost essentially hard-hearted. It has no regard to the wounds it inflicts, and the misery it occasions, in the everlasting, restless pursuit of its darling objects. It has no pity, no delicacy, no candour, no generosity. It will violate the harmonies of families, and break the ties of

friendship, without the slightest compunction. It takes no delight in the every-day affections, duties, and sympathies of humanity. Not unfrequently, it gives rise to fierce intolerance, and cruelty of disposition. In these respects, its influence is the very contrary of pure religious sentiment, which flows out perpetually, as from a secret fountain of love and goodness, in all the intercourse of life.

Taking these views of the nature and effects of fanaticism, we cannot but exclaim with the ancient Preacher, when we witness its daily prevalence, *This also is vanity and a great evil in the world.* It might have been supposed, that this perversion of religion would certainly and entirely abate, with the progress of knowledge. But it must be allowed, that some events and circumstances of the present times seem to render this expectation doubtful. We believe, however, that it may still be confidently cherished. The fact is, that though there has been a considerable accumulation, there is yet but little diffusion, of real knowledge on moral and theological subjects. We hold fast our confidence in the power of reason, truth, and the genuine Gospel, to overcome all these evils. We trust the world is yet destined to see Christianity exhibited in the lives of all its professors in its true character, as a religion which unites the gifts of *love and of a sound mind*, of zeal tempered with sobriety and governed by wisdom. Let the friends of rational faith and piety, in all sects and churches, stand forward and make an open resistance to the encroachments of fanaticism. Let its follies be thoroughly exposed. Let its arrogant pretensions be firmly rebuked. Let it not be quietly suffered, under the plea of good intentions, to creep into our families, and drench the minds of the young and weak with its stimulating but poisonous drugs. Let it not be allowed to thrust itself upon our presence at every turn, in the most innocent and cheerful scenes of social intercourse, with its libellous caricature of all that is good and holy. Let it not be permitted to corrupt our national institutions, customs, habits, with its pharisaical innovations. Let measures be taken to stay its progress, and overthrow its dominion for ever, by abolishing all cant and mystery in religion, by freely laying open the sources of true knowledge, and sound judgment on theological subjects, to all classes of people.

## SONG OF NATURE.

*(Concluded from page 47.)*

When, from the Autumn-cloud,  
 Prolonged and loud,  
 The Thunder-Spirit mutters to the wood,—  
 Or when the freshen'd leaves  
 Shake rain-drops from their eaves,  
 The gloom departed, and the day renewed,—

Tis not *Thy voice* that breaks—  
 And yet it speaks  
 Of thee, and the deep thunder whispers God;  
 And when Earth re-appears,  
 Glittering with fragrant tears,  
 Thou sparklest forth along the emerald sod.

Winter and winds arouse  
 The groaning boughs,  
 Tossing the torn limbs of the oak to Heaven,—  
 And art not Thou too there,  
 Sweeping the forest bare,  
 And on the strong wings of the whirlwind driven?

Nor less, with snow-locks grey,  
 The bending spray,  
 And hoary branch-work of the glistening tree,  
 And the speck'd mountain, seen  
 Brown through the silver screen,  
 Far o'er the radiant snow-scape, shines with Thee.

To Thee the glad lark sings,  
 With his dear wings  
 Shivering with ecstasy in the soft sky;  
 To Thee in dim woods pale  
 The happy cushats wail,  
 And evening throistles shake the elm-boughs high.

Thou gav'st the little bee  
 His murmury glee,  
 The tiny searcher of the hearts of flowers;  
 The gorgeous summer fly  
 Brilliantly wandering by,  
 Shines from the God who gave his few bright hours.

Even the deep joyous tune,  
At sultry noon,  
Of the grey gnat-clould in the sunny nook,  
Where, through the tangling screen  
Of hedge-row hazels green,  
The rich gleam trembles in the tinkling brook.

To Thee the soft lambs raise  
Their bleating praise,  
Bounding in gladness o'er the uncrushed grass ;  
And the far low of kine,  
At summer day's decline,  
Comes like a vesper through the vales they pass.

By Thee the violet's head,  
With dew o'er-shed,  
Looks like a flower dropp'd from the blue spring-heaven ;  
And if the snowdrop rise .  
Amid bleak scenes and skies,  
By thee to frailty strength like faith was given.

Like a pale yellow cloud,  
Primroses crowd,  
Breathing of Him who bade them cluster there ;  
And deep within the shade  
Of copse or woodland glade,  
His hand has vein'd the anemone faint and fair.

The foxglove's purple gleam  
O'er mountain-stream,  
Lit by a stray beam through its hazel bower,  
The hare-bell, sprinkled wide  
Adown the dingly side  
Of fir-tipp'd hill, bless Him who bless'd the flower.

How full of love must He  
In all things be,  
Who strews with beauty even the waste and wold,  
Who gives the moorland lark  
His breathing heath-bower dark,  
The mountain bee his wilderness of gold !



Who, tracing sand and sedge,  
By streamlet's edge,  
Sees dark or bright the minnowy shoals appear,  
And marks their glad excess  
Of untamed happiness,  
Nor feels Thy love has made their waters dear?

And who, by river-side  
At evening-tide,  
When the West blushes on the tender wave,  
Has seen the speckled trout  
For very joy leap out,  
Then, dimpling, drop into his rosy grave,—

Oh who hath e'er seen this,  
Nor felt such bliss  
Speak of the Blessor of all things that live;  
Through whom all Nature teems  
From the stars to the streams,  
With all a loving God in love can give?

But these are lesser things—  
Let bolder strings  
Lift for the mightier elements their voice!  
Give to the mute a tongue,  
Let silence gush to song,  
And Earth and Heaven in the great hymn rejoice!

Ye ancient trees that stand  
A giant band,  
That to the clouds on solemn mountains nod,  
Or cast, in forests pale,  
Glooms for the nightingale,  
Be your millennial shadows dark with God!

Eternal mountains, lift  
Each fractured rift,  
Lone torr, tall peak, or blue horizon, higher!  
Who bade ye soar for aye  
Where winds and falcons play,  
Ye granite kings with crowns of sunset fire?

Rivers, rejoice—rejoice !

Send your deep voice

To Him, through mead and valley, shade and sun,

Where the chaf'd waters leap,

Or where they greenly sleep,

Lit by the darting king-fisher alone !

Ocean, blue, vast, and dim,

Murmur forth Him !

Teach thy own grand religion to the shore !

Still, o'er the tender calm,

Breathe forth thy silvery psalm,

And in the anthem of the storm adore !

Clouds, with your thousand forms,

Dark ghosts of storms,

Or sporting fairies of the summer sky—

Heaving the thunder on,

Piling the sunset's throne,

Beauteous or dread—praise Him alike on high !

Day, with thy glorious Sun,

Shadow forth One,

To whose your rays are gloom, through whom they glow !

From the grey East's first gleam,

To the rich West's last beam,

Praise Him who made all bright, above, below.

Night with thy Star-worlds dim,

Lift thy soft hymn !

Let song like fragrance float through the blue air !

Thou too, oh gentle Moon,

Join the unearthly tune

To Him who bade ye watch and wander there !

Be one exulting word

Through nature heard !

Let Heaven to Earth whisper and answer God !

Nor let the echo die,

Till it shall reach some sky

HE hath not made—some sphere by HIM untrod !

*Crediton.*

## HISTORY OF DISSENTING CHURCHES.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—In most cases in the West of England, our places of worship, have, I believe, descended to us from the ‘*Fathers of Nonconformity*’—“men who hazarded their lives for the Lord Jesus.” And it would do much, I conceive, towards stimulating our zeal in the cause of truth and holiness, if we were more generally brought acquainted with their noble exertions, with their great efforts, in support of civil and religious freedom.

It is our happiness, Sir, to live in an age when the dark spirit of persecution can no longer roam forth for the light of truth and liberality that has been shed abroad;—when bigots have not the power to deprive men of their rights, and send them to the ‘dungeon or scaffold’ for the honest and conscientious exercise of their own judgment on matters of religion. But whilst we are thankful for the freedom of inquiry and profession with which we are favoured,—whilst we rejoice that we are left to the peaceful enjoyment of our own principles, let us not forget to whose exertions we are mainly indebted for our present advantages,—who were the guardians of liberty when it was violated, who were the early advocates of, and sufferers for, those ‘*unmutilated rights*,’ which are the noblest heritage of man.

The great cause of conscientious Nonconformity is associated in my mind with principles which are our true glory. I feel that it is a cause which some of the wisest and best of my race have recommended and adorned. I love to go back to ‘*the olden times*’ of Protestant Dissent, and to think of those venerable worthies who endured persecution, and fines, and bonds, for the sake of conscience; who made so mighty a stand against intolerance, who entered so glorious a protest against spiritual domination. I love to call to mind their honesty, their patriotism, their piety, their uncompromising integrity, and cannot but think that they have laid us under an obligation to speak of them as the protectors of their own, and of their descendants’ liberties.

It appears to me, that of late years we have not been sufficiently careful to vindicate and enforce the grounds of dissent. Many of those who regularly attend our places

of worship, do so, there is reason to fear, rather from custom than from enlightened and confirmed conviction. And what is the consequence?—*indifference*, the bane of true religion. In many instances, too, from not more frequently inculcating the great importance of our principles as Protestant Dissenters, and as Unitarian Dissenters, and defending the *reasons* which compel us to form distinct religious associations, the younger members of our societies, either tempted by the many worldly inducements which the Establishment has to offer, or lured by fashion and the influence of popular opinion, often desert the time-hallowed worship of their fathers, or are led to compliances which do essential injury to the cause of Dissent.

This ought not to be. If we regard the Dissenting cause as the cause of freedom—if we value it as the friend of free inquiry—if we honour it as the guardian of the right of private judgment; if we consider it calculated to promote the spread of truth and virtue, to advance the glory of God and the happiness of mankind,—it is assuredly our duty to exhibit it in this interesting light to others—to “train up our children in the way they should go, that when they are old they may not depart from it.”

Allow me then, Sir, through the medium of the ‘Gospel Advocate,’ to recommend to the ministers and others of our congregations to draw up, and send to you for publication, a concise History of the Unitarian Churches in the West of England, with any information respecting their present condition and future prospects which they may think proper to communicate. It has often occurred to me that it would be highly interesting to the friends of Unitarian Christianity, and useful to the cause of religious liberty, if such an account of our churches could be obtained as would trace out the earliest date of their existence, inform us of the persons by whom they were founded, give us a list of their ministers, and furnish us with any important particulars respecting them, and the societies with which they were connected. Thus, Sir, many a venerable name will be preserved from oblivion,—a mass of valuable and interesting religious information will be collected and preserved,—and we ourselves, as we go up to our temples, shall think of those whose ashes rest in peace around and beneath us; shall be quickened to emulate their public spirit, their pious zeal, their *virtuous Non-conformity*.

W. J.

## JUDAISM AND THE GOSPEL.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—When the design of your periodical work was announced, its *title* seemed appropriate to the sacred purpose to which it was dedicated. Our English word Gospel, from the Saxon Gōdspell, which is compounded of gōd, good, and spell, a history, narration, message, admirably expresses the force and propriety of the Greek *εὐαγγέλιον*.\*

Doubtless, you consider the Gospel as it implies in its most comprehensive extent the whole Christian dispensation, containing the “glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of Christ.” To this effect, the Angel of the Lord announced to the Shepherds of Judea : “ Fear not ; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people ; ” that is to say, of impartial and universal interest. In like manner, Paul, the Apostle of Christ, expressed himself to the Jews and Gentiles of Antioch : “ We declare to you glad tidings, concerning the promise, which was made to the fathers, that God hath fulfilled it to us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus,” first to be the Messiah, and then to appear in glory, the first-born from the dead. Be it known, therefore, unto you, Brethren, that through him a remission of sins is proclaimed unto you ; and to every believer in him an acquittal from all those sins from which ye could not be absolved under the law of Moses. In the words of the Evangelist, the law of ordinances and rites was given by Moses to the Israelites ; but the economy of grace and truth was administered by Jesus Christ, for the benefit of all nations. This gracious system is called the “economy of

\* The learned and judicious reader cannot but be pleased with the excellent observations of Junius on this word : “ Gospel, Evangelium, Anglo-Saxon, Godspell. The English retained this word, when its use was dropt among both the upper and lower Germans. Yet the term Evangelium seemed preferable to Ecclesiastics ; who aspire to a degree of fame, as wise above the vulgar, if in their daily homilies to the people, as well as in every other interpretation of Holy Writ, they have recourse to words less known in general, but familiar to themselves, derived from the Greek and Roman tongues : an affectation of learning, however, by no means required, whilst the word Gospel is most emphatical, and by its composition purely Teutonic conveys, to admiration, the proper meaning of the original Greek-- Evangelium. Junii Etymol. Anglican. in Gospel.



God," or godly improvement in the faith. Hence it is evident, that the Gospel is the glad tidings of salvation to be attained by Christ, or the Christian religion. Theologians, ancient and modern, have been accustomed to maintain that the Gospel dispensation was not only foretold by the Jewish Prophets, but also that it was prefigured and "bodied forth," before its time, by the types and shadows of the Law. Thus faith is the conviction of things not seen, or not yet brought to pass. In the 10th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the law is figuratively styled "a shadow of good things to come, and not the image itself of the things." It is a mere outline, (*σκιαγραφία*) or sketch of the divine object, and not a complete image of the glory of God, reflected from the face of Jesus Christ. It is the bow of heaven, smiling in the shower, like a child in tears—but not the full impress of the sun, whose similitude appears in the horizon before the luminary itself is risen above the eastern hills. The Apostle writes to the Colossians, "Let no man therefore condemn you for use of meats or drinks, or in respect of a feast or new moon, or a Sabbath; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

Time, or the present opportunity, will not admit of entering more at large, into the inquiry concerning the mode in which the Christian doctrine and discipline were shadowed forth in the Mosaic institutes. That this topic is worthy of investigation is obvious from its own intrinsic importance, and from the concurrent testimonies of learned and pious men of all ages and climes. Is it not of supreme importance to discover and ascertain the connection that subsists through the various dispensations of Heaven, in successive periods of the world? Divers communications were, in due season, and suitable portions, distributed to patriarchs and prophets, apostles and evangelists. The rays of divine truth were transmitted through the clouds with more or less splendour, in proportion as the eye of the mind was trained up, from infancy to maturity, so as gradually to "bear them;" or as mankind in process of centuries were prepared by the cultivation of sciences and arts to learn the highest wisdom, and to extend their views from mortality to immortality. Science is the forerunner of sound knowledge, and learning is the guide that unlocks

the treasures of Scripture. "To know truly, is to know by causes,"\* said Lord Bacon. Judge not by appearance only; but judge, by reality, a righteous judgment.

If, according to the same noble author, interpretation be the true and natural office of the mind, it is just and proper to exercise its powers, for this end, in every laudable pursuit. We may, then, ask whether the tabernacle was fashioned by Moses agreeably to the pattern shown him in the Mount? Whether the temple of Solomon was formed after the plan of the tabernacle? And whether that temple primarily or secondarily portrayed the spiritual temple of the Heavenly Jerusalem, which is free, the mother of us all? Are all these images to be understood allegorically, or is the resemblance of the pomp and solemnities that ushered in and attended the two covenants to be traced only in the light of fancy; but by no means as the premeditated result of divine ordinance, and mutual dependency, in a regular series of prototypes and copies? Were the different ages of religion distinct, so as not to pass into each other by insensible transition? Analogy would warrant the hypothesis, that as one season is preparative to its successor in the vicissitudes of the year, so is the progression of intelligence and excellence in the moral world. The seed springs up into a plant, that yields a bud, which unfolds into a blossom, and produces fruit. So is it in the kingdom of heaven. The human race are no more stationary than the waves of the sea, or the leaves of the forest. Variety of circumstances and dispositions in the social state demands appropriate supplies of information. The chiefs of the Hebrew prophets were eye-witnesses of the transfiguration of Christ, when a voice from the cloud directed the attention of the disciples from Moses and Elijah to Christ, saying, "Hear ye Him."

There is an Arabic proverb in these words—"People resemble still more the time in which they live, than they resemble their fathers." Religion is of all principles most fruitful, multiform, and unconfined. It is sympathy with that Being, who seems to delight in diversifying the modes of his agency, and the products of his wisdom and power. It has the liberality and munificence of nature, which not

\* "Vere scire, esse per causas scire"---recte ponitur.

Nov. Organ.

only produces the necessary root and grain, but pours forth fruits and flowers. It has the variety and bold contrasts of nature, which, at the foot of the awful mountain, scoops out the freshest, the sweetest valleys; and embosoms, in the wild, troubled ocean, islands, whose vernal airs, and loveliness, and teeming fruitfulness, almost breathe the joys of Paradise.

July 22, 1833.

EVANDER.

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## THE CLERGY AND THE CREEDS.

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It is painful to think of the degraded condition in which the Clergy of the Church of England are placed, in respect to their religious belief and profession. From the moment they enter on the duties of the Christian ministry,—one of which duties, surely, is an unceasing cultivation of truth and knowledge in sacred things,—they are compelled to give their entire assent to the Articles, Creeds, and Liturgical Service of the Establishment. From these, though confessedly the productions of human fallibility, they are not at liberty to depart, in their worship or teaching. Thus, many thousands of men, in every age, who from education, and from subsequent habits of study, ought to be the best qualified of all men to promote the cause of religious reformation, both in doctrine and practice, are prevented from rendering any but a most prescribed and slavish service to this holy cause. The fact is a melancholy one; but it cannot be denied. The Clergy, after they have once become such, are not free, like other serious and intelligent people, to examine into the soundness of any important article of their religious belief. They are deterred from doing so by the fear of one or other of two very disagreeable consequences—either that they may henceforth be obliged to violate their consciences, by continuing to profess and teach that which they do not believe; or else, that they may be obliged to abandon the only engagements for which they have been educated, to which they have already devoted the best part of their days, and perhaps of their fortunes. These are results greatly to be dreaded, and few have the courage to brave them. The consequence is, that the main body of the Clergy never

show themselves, either in society or in their pulpits, in the character of unshackled, industrious students of theological truth. They never appear to consider this as their proper vocation. It is enough for them to be faithful in adhering to the "Creeds" and "Articles" to which they have been compelled to subscribe. It is sufficient for them to be diligent in dealing out those straitened expositions of Christian belief, which "our venerable Establishment," "our Apostolic Church," has long since pronounced to be orthodox. They may have at their command learning, talents, and leisure; they may feel a pious desire to search the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God in Jesus Christ; in short, they may have the best possible means and opportunities for instructing themselves and their fellow Christians in the things which pertain unto life and godliness;—but they are not at liberty to employ these means, except under certain restrictions, which are neither few nor slight. They cannot materially advance or alter their own views: they must abide by the confessions which they made when they first took holy orders. If any change should unavoidably take place in their convictions, they must not impart their views to the people committed to their spiritual charge. They must pray according to the Liturgy, and teach according to the Thirty-nine Articles. What value can be attached to the services of religious instructors so circumstanced, in comparison with that which would belong to the labours of an equal number of men, equally well qualified, whose minds and tongues were left unfettered? Who ever thinks of asking a Clergyman (especially an unbeneficed one) for his candid opinion on any of the great and difficult topics of religious belief? Why not look at once into the Articles, or the Book of Common Prayer? What should be his opinion—what *must* be his opinion—but that which is there prescribed for him? Is it not folly, then, or an insult, to interrogate such a person on any point of faith? You may converse with other pious and intelligent people on these matters, and expect to gain improvement from a frank communication of their thoughts: but, strange as it may seem, the Clergy, the educated, professed ministers of religion, are the only people with whom you cannot converse on these subjects with entire satisfaction—from whom you cannot



expect a frank and full communication of their thoughts. Their opinions were settled for them, by their clerical predecessors, centuries before they were born. And, strange again, they all think alike; all,—the wisest and the simplest—the strong in intellect and the weak—the studious and the worldly-minded—they that live in their libraries and they that follow the hounds,—all have one set of opinions, and one way of expounding them. Prodigious! what a wonderful thing is the unity of the Church! Does any reflecting person believe that all this *can be* honest, sincere, perfect uniformity of conviction? Does charity really require us to believe, will common sense allow us to believe, that the minds of the Clergy are so differently constituted from the minds of any equal number of thinking persons to be met with in the world?

It is impossible not to feel the greatest sympathy for the many hundreds of virtuous and enlightened men, in every generation, who are subjected to this spiritual thralldom. What a miserable experience is theirs! A young man of talents and acquirements, animated with the best dispositions, resolves to devote himself to the Christian ministry in the Established Church. He is made, at the very commencement, as a necessary qualification for his sacred office, to declare that he believes, and that he will abide by, a numerous series of doctrines, laid down in certain Creeds and Articles. To this, perhaps, he sees no objection at the time; but subsequent inquiry and reflection convince him that many of these doctrines are false and hurtful. What is to be done? He cannot avow his change of opinion—he cannot act upon the improvement of his views in the discharge of his sacred functions, without being prepared to encounter great inconveniences, losses, and sufferings. Here and there one has the fortitude to publish his sentiments, and endure the necessary consequences; but many more, as might be expected from human nature, stifle their convictions, maintain a prudent silence, and keep their benefices. And who are the sufferers from this “quenching of the spirit” in the minds of so many men professedly devoted to the service of truth and piety? Not themselves only, but the Church to which they belong—the flocks to which they minister—the nation by whom they are supported—the Christian community at large. All



disinterested friends of truth and reformation must lament that such things should be. This enlightened Christian country has a right to complain, that it should thus be deprived of the full benefits which might be expected from the labours of a large body of unshackled religious instructors. The Clergy themselves, if they were properly sensible of their situation, would surely be the first to raise a unanimous cry for their deliverance.

There have been instances in which not only individuals, but considerable bodies of the Clergy, have openly expressed their discontent with the circumstances in which they are placed. About forty years since, a Petition was presented to the Legislature, signed by great numbers of the most respectable Clergy, praying to be altogether relieved from subscription to Articles of Faith. The petitioners, of course, failed in their object, and the attempt has never been repeated. But there are signs of the present times, which shew that the grievance is still felt where it ought to be felt most sorely. The spirit of Reform is finding its way into the Church. There are indications of a desire for change, though they are not of the best kind. Many of the Clergy are evidently dissatisfied with their Creeds, and wish to have them altered. They had better demand to have them abolished entirely; and to have the Holy Scriptures made, in reality, as well as in pretension, the only authoritative standard of faith.

Our attention has been attracted to this subject by the recent presentation of a Petition to the House of Lords, from the Rev. Charles N. Wodehouse, Prebendary of Norwich, which strikingly displays the evil working of the system. This learned and respectable gentleman complains that, when he took orders, he was obliged to declare his approbation of the Creeds and Liturgy of the Church; many parts of which he now regards, in the exercise of his maturer judgment, as inconsistent with the word of God;—and he very pathetically beseeches that something may be done for his relief. After pointing out some of the objectionable matters to which he had been compelled to subscribe, he says, “Your petitioner, on reviewing in after years the engagements which he had thus entered into, became doubtful whether he could renew them if called upon to do so; and further reflection only serving to add

strength to such scruples, he feels himself bound no longer to conceal his opinions; and he now ventures to lay them before your Lordships, in the hope of being relieved from the difficulty in which he is involved." He particularly objects to sundry parts of the Athanasian Creed. He calls for the appointment of a Commission to revise the Church Service. This might relieve *him* for the present; but would it relieve others, whose scruples may be of a different nature? Would it permanently remove the general evil? Why not demand at once the abolition of all Creeds, which it is so plain, from this gentleman's own experience, only serve to fetter the minds and ensnare the consciences of the Clergy? Why not petition for a Form of Prayer which shall be purely scriptural in its language and spirit, and especially for a total abandonment of all human Creeds and Articles of Faith? This would tend to relieve not only the Rev. C. N. Wodehouse, but all enlightened and conscientious Clergymen, from that which they must now feel to be an intolerable burden on their minds.

More recently still, the Archbishop of Dublin presented a Petition from the Clergy of Kildare, praying for the appointment of a Commission to revise the Church Liturgy, and the *Translation of the Scriptures*. We rejoice greatly in these manifestations of a growing conviction among the Clergy, that some reformation is needed, not only in their own Creeds, but also in the common Version of the Bible. We trust that, when these improvements shall have been made, by what they are pleased to deem competent authority, they will have the grace to repent of the accusations of ignorance, heresy, and blasphemy, which they have so often uttered against those who have been long calling for these improvements. Yet, even in the language of these clerical petitioners, we find no traces of a determination to cast off their bondage. They are still willing to submit their private judgments to the authority of other men's decisions; and that, without even knowing who those other men are to be. "They will be satisfied," said the Archbishop, "if some competent authorities, after due consideration of the matter, shall declare that no alterations are necessary." This proves, then, that they are not yet emancipated in spirit from the thralldom to which they have been

subjected. They ought *not* to be satisfied with any thing which they themselves deem inconsistent with Truth and the Gospel. They see and feel the evil effects of their submission to human authority, but have not the courage to shake it off. There is no sure relief for them, and for their successors in coming generations, but in the total disuse of all subscription to Creeds and Articles of Faith. Dr. Paley confesses, “that established Creeds are at all times attended with serious inconveniences—that they check inquiry—that they violate liberty—that they insnare the consciences of the Clergy by holding out temptations to prevarication—that they come at length to contradict the actual opinions of the Church whose doctrines they profess to contain.” There is no *mending* such a system as this : it should be destroyed root and branch. A petition to this effect would do the Clergy some credit.

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#### ON THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

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No duty to the young is of equal importance with that of imparting religious knowledge to them, and none is attended with greater difficulties in the performance. To place a curb upon their feelings and passions, to discipline their conduct, to make them comprehend the justice or injustice, the kindness or unkindness of their little actions, is far more easy than to instil into their opening minds the first principles of religion—the knowlege of Him who made them, and blesses their infant existence. By parents especially, and by all upon whom the task of educating the young devolves, these difficulties have been painfully felt. They have given “line upon line and precept upon precept,” without appearing to make much progress in their anxious undertaking ; and their ill-success has led them to suspect the wisdom and prudence of engaging in it until the reasoning powers are considerably expanded, and the mind is fully equal to the comprehension of the lofty subject. Perhaps they have despaired without reason, and the ideas they thought were dead, have only rested for a time, and then sprung forth into activity and strength, as the seed and the bud sleep in the bosom of nature till the genial season calls them into life, and bids them weave their blossoms and shed their fragrance.

These difficulties originate not only in the infant mind itself, but in the nature of the subject upon which its young powers are exercised. We scarcely perceive the germ of mind in the little being that nestles in its mother's bosom. The most helpless of beings, its form acquires firmness and strength but by slow degrees; more gradual still is the developement of those powers which are occasionally destined to shine forth with extraordinary splendour, in a Socrates, a Plato, or a Newton. Who that never felt this developement within himself, nor watched it in another, could dream that the germ of the mighty, mysterious something, which we call *mind*, and which, in its highest soarings, fills the many who own and improve it with astonishment, is wrapt in the fragile form of the infant? Scarcely perceptible at first, it opens by little and little, and receives ideas; but of these it can only imbibe the simplest, and after sensation has frequently renewed them. Afterwards, indeed, the process is more rapid; but we are speaking of its early state.

Then, as to the subject. If Simonides could not describe God, what child can comprehend him? can entertain notions approaching in any degree to correctness, of his exalted nature, the immensity of his perfections, and the beauty and glory of his moral character? The most vigorous intellect faints under its exertions when it attempts to measure these;—well may that intellect in its first dawnings of power be incompetent to the task. In the earliest stage of the mind, it must, therefore, be all but a hopeless attempt to instil ideas of this magnitude; some expansion of mental power must precede the attempt, and cultivation also lend its aid, before the elements of that wisdom which is more precious than rubies, can be implanted in the infant breast.

Still, if we weigh the value and immense importance of religious knowledge, we shall be powerfully impressed by the necessity of cultivating the infant mind, and guiding its thoughts and affections in this sacred direction, with the least possible delay. Where the least prospect of success presents itself, it will never be too early to plant those seeds of piety which may blossom at a future period in rich and sweet profusion. That which is to form the human being for the highest purposes of his existence—to



impart true dignity to the nature he wears in this world—to become the foundation of his glory in another—and to enlarge itself in the various forms of heavenly bliss,—should not be long withheld. As soon as the mind's eye, like that of the body, begins to fix its gaze upon forms and objects, the time approaches when the greatest of all objects may be brought within its view. As soon as the pliancy of the mental powers is perceived, the hand of the instructor—and that instructor should be the parent—must be busy with them, to mould them into a religious form, and to impress upon them those simple but beautiful characters of the Divine Being which their delicate texture will bear, and which may be re-impressed with more force and accuracy as their developement becomes more vigorous. Here, however, caution is necessary. Of the knowledge which we term *divine*, some portions are of less importance, and some less adapted to the capacities of the young, than others. It would be useless as well as vain to force into the tender, and almost-unformed mind, those ideas of God which are purely metaphysical: were it able to seize upon them it could not employ them to any purpose; and these, therefore, should be generally withheld, whilst the perfections of his moral character, and the extent and blessings of his providence, are rendered evident by those familiar descriptions and illustrations which the opening mind can receive without extraordinary effort, and which will at the same time gratify its eager thirst for information, and prepare it for receiving a stronger and more nutritious aliment. By calling into life ideas of this nature in the infant mind, the judicious instructor, like a wise master builder, lays that solid foundation on which the beautiful superstructure of piety may be reared: for the most efficient performance of this interesting and holy duty nature presents the way.

The earliest associations of children are of their parents. From them their little pleasures are derived, by them their wants are supplied, and they have no other idea than this, that their parents are the primary causes of their happiness. Hence the origin of that love which a longer experience of parental care and tenderness matures, and which those only turn from their breasts who are stained by the dark crime of ingratitude. It is the mother's privilege, whilst she



waits on her tender child, to unite with these associations ideas of a more benevolent and more powerful Parent,—one who blesses the exercise of parental affection on earth, and who is the great Father and Guardian of parents themselves, as well as of their offspring. She may thus give a generous stimulus to filial affection, whilst she calls forth and blends with it affections of piety. There are times when the minds of the young, like those of maturer growth, are favourably disposed to the reception of religious impressions. Let the mother,—for to a mother we justly look for the commencement, at least, of this grand work—let the mother seize the opportunity. It may be that the child is grateful for some unexpected enjoyment, and pours out its artless thanks to her who has bestowed it; whilst the heart is thus warm and susceptible, allusions to a Being who is ever dispensing happiness around him, cannot be made without prolonging the excitement and renewing the pleasure of its grateful feelings. We may say that these allusions should be as simple as possible; but the mother's affection and the replies of her child will more surely guide her in her attempts to plant the seeds of piety in its bosom, than any rules the philosopher may prescribe. Thus the first simple ideas of the benevolence of the Deity, may be naturally excited; more extended ideas of his paternity may be communicated as naturally and successfully, if the parent be on the alert to improve the favourable moment. For such an object, parents may consistently speak of their own attention and care. They will not be guilty of vanity, if they direct the thoughts of their child to the exertions they make for its welfare, to the protection they afford it, to their arduous attention to its comfort in the day,—its safety in the night; and hints of this kind will produce in themselves much benefit. They may go further, to make the little moral being aware of the advantages it receives from the occasional denial of its wishes, and the checking its petulant humours; and when it appears sensible of these benefits, the extension of such ideas will be far from an impossible task. The exercise of parental love when felt and but dimly understood by the tender child, will prepare him for listening with pleasure and delight to descriptions of his Heavenly Father's kindness and love, flowing from the lips of those

to whom he looks for happiness ; and his little heart will beat with emotion as he learns that there is some Being far more exalted, powerful and benevolent, than his parents, who has a claim upon his expanding affections. Similar illustrations will lead him to form correct notions of the providence of God, and his holy character ; for the first ideas may be extended and enlarged by judicious culture, till correct, though undoubtedly feeble conceptions, are entertained by the infant mind of a good and holy God. This grand result cannot be secured without renewed efforts on the part of the parent ; and it will frequently happen that the artless being who is receiving the elements of religious instruction, evinces by some casual remark, that if it have imbibed the ideas presented to its mind it makes an irregular application of them.

A little boy, whose mother had endeavoured to explain to him that God was acquainted with all things, had taken his spade, and was going to dig in his garden. His mother observed that it would probably rain. He instantly replied—" God knows that I am going to work, so he will make it fine." He thought of the goodness and the omniscience of God, but he was too young to exercise the power of discrimination. Errors like these, however, which are inseparable from the infant mind, may be gradually corrected : they must not be pleaded as an excuse for neglecting to cultivate the religious affections in the bosom of the child. The vast importance of this duty justifies our appeal to parents in its behalf. If it be neglected, what immense injuries are experienced by society—if it be sedulously and affectionately paid, how much are the moral welfare and felicity of mankind enhanced ! Upon mothers, to whose culture the tender plants designed to flourish in immortality and glory are first confided, a sacred obligation is laid—to them a noble scene of exertion opens. Amidst their lesser cares for their offspring, let them not forget the first, the most important care. Whilst affection gazes on their child's loveliness, and they shew it forth with all the pride of dress, let them bear in mind that the lovelier, the nobler part, is hidden, and requires their aid to give form and feature to its graces. Prodigal of their own love, they should seek its best reward as they pour it forth, in storing the souls of their young charge with the fair and simple ornaments of piety.

To these remarks we subjoin a fragment of a letter, which we think will be read with much interest.

“I had long wished for an opportunity of giving the first ideas respecting the existence of the Divine Being to our dear little Harriet, when, one Sunday evening after most of the family were gone to Meeting, she said, ‘I should like very much to be a bird and fly up in the sky.’

‘I answered—But you have no wings.’

‘Yes I have, these are wings’ (pointing to the cape of her frock) ‘Samuel said so.’

‘But they are not like birds’ wings, you could not fly with them.’

‘Let me try—no, I cannot.’ After a moment’s silence—‘Perhaps some one will give me wings some day.’

‘No, you cannot have wings. You are a little girl, and will never be able to fly.’

Why? the little bird has wings—who gave the little bird wings?’

‘A great Being who is called God.’

‘Being—God?’—‘Yes, he made the birds and you.’

‘Me? what a *clever* God! and you, and Aunt, and John, and Elizabeth?’—‘Yes; and he takes care of you, and gives you all that makes you glad and happy.’

‘O how very kind!’

‘And when you are good he loves you’

‘Does he? and will he come and see me?’—‘He sees you now.’

‘Sees me now—and you?’—‘Yes, and every body.’

[Much surprised] ‘Where is God?’ ‘Every where.’ ‘What, in this room?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘And in the blue sky, and the white sky?’

‘Yes.’ ‘I can’t see him.’ ‘No, you cannot see him.’

After a moment’s thought she said with much animation—‘But you can see me, and I can see you, and when peoples see me I can see those, but I can’t see God. Where is he? Is he in Aunt’s room? I should like to see him very much.’

‘My love, you cannot see him now, but when you die you will see him if you are good.’

‘Shall I die now?’

‘I hope not, perhaps you may grow tall before you die—but you can speak to God.’

‘Let me speak to him then.’

‘Do you remember telling me that Emma said prayers? that is speaking to God, asking him to take care of us, and thanking him for making us so happy.’

‘Well, then, I will say prayers too. Will you teach me to say prayers? and will you take me to bed? Now I shall see if God is in Aunt’s room.’

‘My dear Harriet, you cannot see him.’

She quickly said, ‘But he can see me, and he is very pleased to see me now, I am quite good.’

She then repeated after me a short prayer, but words are inadequate to convey an idea of the expression of her face when she said ‘There, God has heard me.’ In a few minutes she was asleep, and the sweet serenity of her countenance forcibly illustrated the saying of the benevolent Jesus—‘Of such is the kingdom of heaven.’”

W.

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Matthew xi. v. 27.

IN this passage our Saviour affirms, that neither himself the Son, nor the Father, could be known to any man, unless from divine revelation. They were known, he declares, only to each other. It is the business of the rational interpreter of Scripture, to ascertain in what sense, in reference to what kind of knowledge, both of himself and of the Father, Jesus made this assertion. Trinitarian Christians, we believe, understand it of the inscrutable and incomprehensible nature of the Godhead, which they suppose to be here ascribed alike to the Son and to the Father; and viewing the passage in this light, they regard it as a decisive argument for the proper deity of Christ. Not that, in this instance, more than in others, there is any thing like a unanimity of opinion, amongst intelligent and candid Trinitarians, in favour of the popular interpretation. There are very few controverted texts indeed of which *this* can be said; and in the present instance, some of the first Biblical scholars among the orthodox entirely agree with Unitarians in their views of our Lord's meaning.

It may be as well to observe, in passing, that this is a striking fact, which merits the closest attention of an impartial inquirer. It has been said, that a complete and triumphant refutation of every supposed scriptural argument for Trinitarianism, may be found in the writings of orthodox commentators of the highest reputation. We shall not undertake to say, at present, whether or not this statement can be fully justified. But we are quite persuaded that there are *not many* passages of scripture, of the least weight in the controversy, to which this observation may not be strictly applied. Nor can it be denied by any reasonable person, that this circumstance wears an aspect extremely unfavourable to the Trinitarian system. Is it likely, that if the popular interpretations of Scripture were sound, the fallacy of almost all of them would be thus detected and exposed, by some one or other of the ablest advocates for the doctrines they are thought to countenance? What but the irresistible evidence of truth

could produce such effects? This is surely a strong presumptive argument against Trinitarian views: and it is an argument which cannot be fairly retorted upon Unitarians; for though they may often differ in their interpretation of obscure and controverted passages, they do not *so* differ, as that any of them fall into the ranks of their common opponents.

But to return to the passage under consideration. Jesus says in the verses preceding, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father." What things can it be supposed that he is here speaking of? Surely, it is of the things which belong to the will and counsels of the Father for the redemption of mankind. These were the only things which, on any scheme of doctrine, had been delivered or committed unto the Son by the Father. These were the only things, the knowledge of which could be revealed unto babes in wisdom, though they were hidden from the unbelieving Jews, the wise and prudent in their own conceit. Why, then, should it be imagined that Jesus alluded to any other kind of knowledge, in the particular words under consideration, which immediately follow. "No one knoweth the Son but the Father." At that time, not even the chosen disciples of Christ had any accurate conceptions of the nature and objects of his divine mission. No one but God himself knew the purposes for which Jesus was sent into the world, or the means by which those purposes were to be accomplished. The glorious design of salvation for Jew and Gentile, was yet a mystery, an unrevealed mystery, hidden in the bosom of God alone, or imparted only to his beloved Son. "Neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him." This clause is reciprocal and correlative to the former. It follows, in the sense we have explained, that if no one but the Father knew the Son, no one but the Son could know the Father: though it would by no means follow according to the Trinitarian interpretation; for many persons might and did know the Godhead, the eternity, the infinite majesty and perfection of the Father, without having the



least conception that these attributes belonged to the Son. But if no one except the Father knew the true nature of Christ's office and mission, (as was undoubtedly the case at this time,) then no one except Christ, and he to whomsoever Christ should make the revelation, could know the all-merciful plans of the Father contemplated in the Christian dispensation. It is evident, from the very construction of the passage, that the knowledge spoken of respecting the Son, is *the same kind* of knowledge as that which respects the Father. But it could not have been truly said of the persons to whom Jesus was now speaking, that they did not know the deity and eternal perfections of the Father. The Jews were thoroughly possessed of this knowledge. It follows, therefore, that the knowledge relating to the Son, which no one but the Father had, was not the knowledge of *his* deity and eternal perfections. The view taken of the passage by Trinitarians, then, is not only groundless; but, as is very common in their methods of interpretation, it closely borders upon absurdity:—it deprives that, which is otherwise a very just and forcible passage, of almost all point and meaning. What the Jews really did not know concerning the Father, and never could know until Christ had revealed it to them, was the great design of his wisdom and love communicated in the Gospel. What no one but the Father knew concerning the Son, therefore, was the part which he was to sustain, the means which he was to employ, the sufferings which he was to undergo, and the glorious success which was to crown his labours, in the fulfilment of this blessed design. Neither in the context, nor in the words themselves, is there any thing like an allusion to the incomprehensible perfections of the divine nature, in regard to the Son or to the Father. These ideas are suggested to the minds of Trinitarians by the influence of their own previously admitted system, not by the language of the Scriptures. The words of Christ relate not to a barren metaphysical dogma concerning the existence of a plurality of divine persons in the Godhead, but to a solemn practical truth. It is only through the revealed knowledge imparted to us by our Saviour, that we can properly know the Father,—his infinite goodness, his redeeming love, his purposes of grace and salvation for all his sinful creatures.

## A MEDITATION IN THE FIELDS AT EVENTIDE.

A little Star shone out in the peaceful night, and threw its soft radiance on the bosom of a tiny rivulet. A cloud, stealing over the vault of heaven, for a few moments hid the twinkling wanderer in her fleecy vapour. It was *but* for a few moments; and the gentle stream again reflected its liquid radiance. "This star," said one who had gone forth to meditate at that tranquil hour, "is *Hope*, which, heaven-born, sheds its blest influence on the heart of man. *Sorrow*, like the cloud, rising from the earth, may for a time obscure its brightness; but *Sorrow* quickly passes, and *Hope* again sends down her rays of purest joy."

Tavistock.

## BEST MEANS OF IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF THE POOR.

*The Visitor of the Poor, designed to aid in the formation and working of Provident and other kindred Societies. Translated from the French of the Baron De Gerando; with an Introduction by the Rev. J. Tuckermann, D. D. of Boston, U. S. London: Simpkin and Marshall. 1833.*

To cause prudence and charity to meet together—wisdom and benevolence to kiss each other,—this is what the character and necessities of the present age most urgently demand. The great social evil under which we are labouring, is the wretchedly depressed condition, both physical and moral, of the poorest classes of the community. All other improvements will be utterly vain, unless they lead to, or are accompanied by, the removal of this evil. We verily believe that there is abroad in society immeasurably more of sincere desire to effect this good work, than of sound knowledge respecting the means to be employed. Every one who contributes to rectify and enlarge our views on this important subject, therefore, deserves to be hailed as a most timely benefactor. We esteem the little book mentioned above as eminently calculated to answer these ends; and on this account recommend it earnestly to the

attention of our readers. The table of Contents will give the best impression of the nature of the work :—

Preface by the English Editor-	-	-	-	-	-
Introduction by Dr. Tuckerman, of Boston,	-	-	-	-	-
CHAP. I. Aim and Character of Charity	-	-	-	-	-
CHAP. II. Characteristics of Real Indigence	-	-	-	-	-
CHAP. III. Classification of the Poor-	-	-	-	-	-
CHAP. IV. Virtues of the Poor	-	-	-	-	-
CHAP. V. Vices and Moral Amelioration of the Poor	-	-	-	-	-
CHAP. VI. Means of obtaining the Confidence of					}
the Poor	-	-	-	-	
CHAP. VII. Education of the Children of the Poor	-	-	-	-	-
CHAP. VIII. Begging	-	-	-	-	-
CHAP. IX. Wise Distribution of Charity	-	-	-	-	-
CHAP. X. Who should be called to the office of					}
Visitor of the Poor	-	-	-	-	
CHAP. XI. Spirit of Association	-	-	-	-	-
CHAP. XII. Of the Co-operation of Young People					}
in the Establishments of Humanity	-	-	-	-	

The Baron De Gerando, the author of the work, is a man of great experience on the subject, being at the head of one of the twelve municipal Associations by whom the poor of the city of Paris are regularly visited and relieved. The Rev. Dr. Tuckerman is the well-known, enlightened *Minister of the Poor*, in the populous city of Boston, in the United States. The English Editor is the Rev. J. R. Beard, of Manchester ; and his Preface is an exceedingly valuable addition to this very useful book.

It is impossible to peruse such a work without being convinced that there is a vast field for the exercise of the highest wisdom, as well as of the purest benevolence, in the work of ameliorating the condition of the poor. Private exertions, and local associations, may here most advantageously come in aid of improvements in our national institutions. The subject is one in which we feel intense interest ; fully persuaded that it is second in importance to none which at present occupies public attention.

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

*Jewish Disqualifications.*—The hope which we ventured to express, at the close of our remarks on Public Affairs in the last number, has unhappily not been realized. The Bill for removing the civil and political disabilities of the Jews, which had passed the House of Commons by a large majority, has *not* become the law of the land,—having been rejected in the House of Peers. It is impossible, looking at the character and temper of the present times, that this should be any thing but a mere temporary check to the cause of perfect religious liberty. This poor and despicable remnant of intolerance, must soon share the fate which has befallen greater iniquities of the same kind,—be swept away by the force of public opinion. The next Session of Parliament will probably be the last during which it will be allowed to disgrace the Statute Book. In the mean time, without entering on any considerations of a party nature, we cannot help observing how lamentable it is, to witness in certain quarters a dogged disposition to render every such improvement in our laws an exaction wrung from bigotry, instead of a boon bestowed by liberality. Is it conceivable that high birth and station should so blind the understandings of men, as to lead them to suppose that the people who have granted Catholic emancipation, and the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, will long permit the civil condition of their Jewish fellow-subjects to remain as it now is? We are very sure that, if none others took any interest in the matter, those who have been relieved by the two former Acts, Catholics and Protestant Dissenters, will feel bound to call aloud for the same measure of justice to the Jews, which they have already procured for themselves; and they will not relax in their efforts till their purpose is attained. But the support which was given to the rejected Bill, in both Houses, showed that its object was fully approved by the wise and enlightened of all religious persuasions. The arguments that were employed against it are beneath our respect. For the honour of the country, we regret the unwise delay in passing this measure; but we cannot entertain a moment's doubt of the final and speedy accomplishment of our wishes.

*The Irish Church Reform Bill, and the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery*, have received the Royal Assent during the last month. Neither of them, we fear, have much claim to be regarded as perfect specimens of bold and decisive legislation for the removal of an acknowledged grievance. On both subjects, it will probably soon be necessary to legislate again. It is cheering to believe, however, that whatever further steps may be taken, must unavoidably be in advancement of the great ends of reformation, liberty, and justice.

*Exemption of Dissenting Chapels from Taxation.*—The Bill brought into Parliament by Mr. Wilkes, with a view to exempt all Dissenting Places of Worship from the payment of taxes and poors' rates, has also received the Royal sanction. There has long been a very vexatious uncertainty in the law, or in the administration of the law, on this subject. The present Act, we apprehend, is intended and calculated to put an end to this uncertainty. All places appropriated, *bona fide*, to religious worship, are now exempted from these burdens.

*Education of the People.*—Twice within a month this most interesting and important subject has been under discussion before the House of Commons. On the 30th of July, Mr. Roebuck, the Member for Bath, brought forward the following Resolution:—"That this House will, early in the ensuing Session, consider the means of establishing a system of National Education." He was seconded by Mr. Grote, Member for the City of London. The object of the Honourable Mover seems to have been, if he had carried his Resolution, to bring forward in the next Session a plan of most extensive and complete education for all the people of the land, to be under the immediate controul and direction of Government. If we understand the matter rightly, this education was to be made *compulsory* on all classes. The Resolution did not pass, however, being withdrawn by the Mover, after some observations from Lord Althorp, Sir Robert Peel, and others, expressing their doubts whether the interference of Government in education might not do more harm than good, by checking private exertions. On the 17th of August, at the recommendation of the Committee of Supply, a grant of £20,000 was made for the promotion of public education in England. It was stated to be the intention of Government to hand



over this money to the Committees of the National (or Bell's), and of the British and Foreign, School Societies. It will most likely be spent in the building of school-houses. We hope it will be fairly and judiciously employed. But without expressing any opinion on the plan of Mr. Roebuck, we confess that our own desire is strongly in favour of this whole business of general education being taken in hand by the Government. It would be essential to the success of such a plan that it should be founded on principles of perfect liberality, ensuring equal rights and advantages to all sects and parties. The system of mere *reading* and *writing*, now pursued in our schools, never can produce any extensively beneficial results. The people must have *knowledge*—real, substantial, useful knowledge.

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### INTELLIGENCE.

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At a meeting of the Teachers of the Sunday-schools attached to the congregations in Worship Street, Coles Street, and Spicer Street, London, held at Coles Street, August 9th, 1833, the Rev. R. K. Philp in the chair, the following resolutions were passed :

I. That an Union be formed between the three Schools, the Teachers of which are now present:

II. That this Union be for the purpose of mutual information, encouragement, and assistance.

III. That for these purposes, a Quarterly meeting of the Teachers be held on the first Sundays in January, April, July and October, at such place and hour as from time to time may be deemed convenient.

IV. That a Fund be formed by Donations and Subscriptions from schools and individuals, for the purpose of publishing any works for use in Sunday-schools, which may seem to be called for, and for carrying into effect, in any way, the purposes of this Union.

V. That a Secretary and Treasurer be appointed to transact the business of the Union, under the direction of the Quarterly meeting.

VI. That a Special general meeting be called by the Secretary, at the requisition of any two Teachers of the Schools connected with the Union.

VII. That a General Meeting be held on some convenient day in the summer of each year, when reports shall be read of the progress and prospects of each School connected with the Union, and also a General Report of the state of the Union.

VIII. That a Special Committee be appointed by the Quarterly or General Meeting, to transact any business which may call for greater attention than ordinary.

IX. That, as the extension of this Union is highly desirable, other Schools be invited to join it.

X. That each School connected with the Union, shall contribute annually a Sum of not less than Five Shillings.

XI. That Mr. William Newton Coupland, of 15, Globe Road, Mile End, be elected Secretary to this Union.

XII. That Mr. Robert Green, of 42, Whitechapel Road, be appointed Treasurer to this Union.

XIII. That the Secretary be requested to have copies of the resolutions now entered into, printed, and sent to the Editors of the different Unitarian periodicals.

XIV. That the cordial Thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Philp, for his able and impartial conduct in the Chair this evening, and for his general attention to the interests of Sunday-schools.

W. N. COUPLAND. *Secretary.*

15, Globe Road, Mile End.

THE Annual General Meeting of the Unitarian Tract Society, established in Birmingham, for Warwickshire and the neighbouring Counties, took place at Shrewsbury, on Thursday, June 13, 1833. The Rev. J. G. Robberds, of Manchester, read prayers, and the Rev. William Bowen, M. A., of Cradley, preached an appropriate and interesting sermon from John xiv, 9. At the close of the service the usual business of the Association was transacted, when seventeen members of the Shrewsbury congregation enrolled themselves Subscribers to the Society. About thirty gentlemen afterwards dined together, the Rev. Richard Astley, minister of the congregation being in the chair; several other ministers were present, and the day was spent in much pleasing and useful intercourse. This was the first meeting of the kind ever held at Shrewsbury, and considerable interest seems to have been felt in the proceedings of the day and the objects of the Society, by those persons who were present.

The Warwickshire Unitarian Tract Society was instituted in 1806 at Birmingham, under the auspices of the late venerable Dr. Toulmin, its first Secretary; and after those which had their origin in London, in the West, and in the South of England, was the next in order of time, of the eminently useful Associations which have been "established for the diffusion of religious knowledge and the practice of virtue by the distribution of books," and which notwithstanding the new Societies since formed, and the new plans since adopted, for the promotion of the same great objects, have lost none of their efficiency or importance.

J. REYNELL WREFORD, *Secretary.*

#### TO SUBSCRIBERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

We regret that circumstances have not yet allowed us to re-print No. I.; but we again pledge ourselves that it shall be done very shortly, & Subscribers may rely on having their sets completed.

Philanthropos on Prison Discipline shall appear in our next. The letters to the Bishop of Exeter we must decline publishing, for reasons which we have no doubt would be satisfactory to our respected Correspondent. Favours have been received from A Ci-devan Observer; W. J. P.; A Discenter, &c. &c.

# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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No. IV.

OCTOBER, 1833.

VOL. I.

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## ON SCEPTICISM.

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THERE is a state of mind very common in these days, which we think may be usefully distinguished, as well from absolute unbelief, as from settled faith, by the appropriate name of *Scepticism*. On the nature, causes, and evils of this state of mind, we propose to offer a few remarks.

Perhaps it may be truly said, that both in the ranks of those who are favourable, and of those who are more or less hostile to revelation, there are two classes of persons, whose characters in many points are similar. First, among professors of the Gospel, there are such as, having fully and carefully examined the subject, have arrived at a firm, determined, rational conviction, that the Christian religion is divine. Their faith, whether it shall ultimately prove to be a delusion or not, has its foundations in knowledge and judgment. To this class of believers correspond, amongst those who are against the Gospel, such as having also inquired into the supposed proofs of revelation, and weighed the objections to which it is thought liable, have come with equal confidence to a precisely contrary decision;—namely, that Christianity, so far as it pretends to a divine origin, is unquestionably false. Their unbelief, whether absolutely correct or erroneous, is like the faith of rational believers founded on deliberate thought and judgment. But, secondly, among religious professors there are multitudes who have never been able, or if able, not disposed, to examine systematically concerning the proper evidences of revelation; and yet they have a strong inclination to rest satisfied in their actual persuasion of the truth of all its doctrines. They are probably biased in favour of the Christian religion, by the influence of education, habit and example. It may be, that they are guided very much by their feelings, which are deeply interested by the events of the sacred history, by the instructions, warnings, and promises of Scripture.

Or they may be convinced by some one or two arguments for the truth of Christianity, accidentally presented to their attention; though they have no accurate, comprehensive, knowledge of the subject. From whatever cause the attachment of such men to the Gospel may arise, it is usually very firm, so long as nothing occurs to shake it; but it is very apt to be suddenly disturbed by novel and plausible objections, and most of all by corrupt temptations. In contrast with this class of believers, there are numbers of men in these days whose minds, though not completely settled in unbelief, are strongly bent to doubt and reject Christianity. This inclination has been produced in them, in all probability, by the same kind of partial and accidental causes, as have given rise to the faith of so many religious professors. Some feeling, or some prejudice, ill-grounded or ill-directed, may have given their minds this unfavourable bias. Certain difficulties and objections to which revealed religion is exposed, (in common with most moral subjects,) may have taken fast possession of their understandings, and cannot be dislodged. Some gross misapprehensions into which they have fallen, respecting either the doctrines of divine revelation, or the historical facts connected with its origin and progress, may have led them to view the subject altogether through a false medium. Stubborn as the scepticism of such minds may appear, for the time, there is always room to hope that it will at length yield to argument and more extended information.

The principal causes of this habit of mind we will briefly investigate immediately. But the habit of mind itself is such as we have now attempted to describe. It is a distrust, a suspicion, rather than a positive rejection of Christianity. It is not exactly a halting between two opinions; for there is generally a decided leaning towards infidelity. It is a state of great doubt, of strong hesitation and suspicion, in regard to the truth of revealed religion. The individual who is subject to it, is conscious of an inability, and an indisposition, to believe the things recorded in the Christian Scriptures, and yet he neither feels nor pretends that he is quite sure of their untruth. He may have made Christianity the subject of some degree of serious inquiry, or he may have taken his impressions of it entirely from loose, general observation, on the

words and actions of its professors. In either case, the result has been the same;—not that he receives Christianity as divine truth fully established;—not that he is altogether prepared to pronounce it a cunningly devised fable;—but that he *doubts*. He is a *sceptic*, in the sense to which we here wish to confine the name.

This spirit of scepticism embodies itself in many different forms. It manifests its existence in various ways, according to the varieties of character with which it is associated. Some men display their scepticism by total reserve and indifference of conduct, whenever the subject of religion is mentioned in their presence. Others are always ready to broach some subtle objection, some favourite sceptical argument; and, without openly declaring that such is their conviction, they evidently shew that they both wish and expect to find the objection fatal, the argument unanswerable. Others, (the most inexcusable of all,) adopt the method of making religion the perpetual theme of their sarcasm and ridicule; scoffing at that which, as they cannot entirely confute its claims to the highest reverence, they ought at least to treat with moderation and respect.

Among the most prevalent causes of this scepticism, we reckon an imperfect and confused knowledge of all that relates to the original introduction of Christianity. We feel justified, by frequent observation, in saying that this particular defect of knowledge is exceedingly common, even with persons in other respects of much intelligence. The study of religion, in a philosophical point of view, as an important branch of the history of the human mind and of human society, has not yet been made popular. Even great readers meet with but few allurements to read in this particular line. Works on ecclesiastical history are for the most part very dull and uninteresting compilations. They answer to their title, and are histories of the *Church* rather than of Christianity. They relate chiefly to the internal quarrels, troubles and triumphs, of the Church of Christ, after it became a distinct and flourishing community. This, at all events, is the character of such ecclesiastical histories as fall most under the attention of general readers. They leave nearly untouched all the circumstances relating to the proper origin of Christianity, in connection with the existing state of opinions and the



peculiar character of the age, with the dissolution of the Jewish polity and the decline of heathen philosophy and superstition, with the public events, and with the moral and social condition of the times;—circumstances adapted to work such a strong conviction of the truth and divinity of the Christian religion, in every mind thoroughly imbued with the knowledge of them. From want of this knowledge, the mass of mankind see nothing in Christianity but a particular set of opinions, which arose in some way, about two thousand years since, among the Jews; then quickly spread among the heathen; and was soon taken up, like every other popular system of opinions, by designing priests and rulers, as a convenient instrument of domination. They see little or nothing of the origin and progress of the Gospel, till the days of its slavery and corruption, when it became attended with a thousand suspicious circumstances. It appears in their eyes too much like one of the many shifting forms of superstition which have prevailed in the world, grounded on popular ignorance and supported by priestcraft. They have no clear conception of its original circumstances, when it was opposed to all the powers and prejudices of the world; when, without any earthly aid, in direct contradiction to all external influences, it wrought an unspeakably greater change in the views, feelings, and conduct of its numerous believers, in all parts of the known world, than was ever before or since effected in the characters of human beings. From this defect of knowledge,—from these misty notions of the real beginning of Christianity,—scepticism naturally springs. Seeing nothing of the Gospel in the true strength, beauty and glory, of its primitive triumphs;—losing sight of it altogether, or viewing it but very indistinctly, until its most splendid victories over idolatry were accomplished, and, like a satiated conqueror, it seemed to lose its proper virtues amidst the luxury and flattery of courts;—regarding the Christian religion only in this false and confused light, men are naturally made sceptical as to its divine pretensions. They are tempted to include it in the sweeping suspicion, which they have been accustomed to entertain towards all popular superstitions. We believe, therefore, that nothing would more tend to the removal of scepticism from intelligent and candid minds, than a better acquaintance with the truly

original circumstances of Christianity. And perhaps no better service could be rendered to the cause of divine truth, at the present day, than a masterly history and delineation of those circumstances; in such a manner as to show both the extent of the conquests which primitive Christianity made, and the nature of the means by which those conquests were achieved. Many a mind which is now sceptically disposed, would then see how impossible it is that the Gospel should be false.

Another very prevalent cause of scepticism, is to be found in the gross misapprehensions which are common, respecting the true principles of Christianity, its doctrines, spirit, and requirements. Is it any wonder that men are sceptical, in a thinking and inquiring age like the present, when you teach them that they are bound to believe in the revelation of things inconsistent with one another, contradictory to reason, and revolting to piety? We are not here called upon to argue the question, how far men would be bound to embrace the most absurd dogmas of faith, if they were fully satisfied that these dogmas constitute part of a divine revelation. We only ask, if the very fact of such things being proposed for the belief of rational minds, be not calculated to render men sceptical as to the truth and divinity of that religion which is supposed to require such a faith? This is the first and most natural effect of such irrational doctrines: and here we discover one of the most fruitful causes of modern scepticism. We speak from deep persuasion, when we say that the popular views of religion in our day, are not pure Christianity, as it came from Jesus and his Apostles; but they are Christianity perverted, corrupted, over-laden with the errors of a thousand years of darkness. We know that sceptical persons are seldom disposed to allow this. It would be strange if they were; since it is the contrary conviction which has made them sceptical. They will have it, that Christianity is what the generality of Christians at present understand it to be. As to the controversies respecting doctrine existing among Christians, they pronounce these to be questions which can never be settled on any firm basis,—everlasting food for the ingenuity and subtilty of learned disputants. With these notions rooted in their minds, we cannot be surprised that they continue sceptical. The common views of Christianity cannot be

heartily received in an age of knowledge and free inquiry, except in those instances where religious sentiment is strong enough to overpower the dictates of reason: and such instances will continually become less numerous amongst intelligent people. All this only renders us the more zealous, to maintain and diffuse those purer views of the Gospel, which we are well convinced may be proved to be the genuine doctrines of the New Testament. In this way only can one of the most certain causes of scepticism be removed from the minds of thinking men.

Another prevalent cause of scepticism, may be found in the ignorance and superstition which are so common respecting the character of the Sacred Scriptures. It is a most unfortunate circumstance that the very writings which, if they were regarded in their true light, if they were justly appreciated and rationally studied, would exhibit to every impartial mind abundant evidences of the truth of their contents,—that these should be turned into sources of scepticism, by the influence of the false and superstitious views with which they are usually regarded. Yet such we fear is undeniably the fact. We deem it to be impossible, that a person of plain, but of acute and reflecting mind, should open the Bible, impressed with the popular notion that he is to meet there with nothing but the undoubted words of inspiration, and that he should close it again without experiencing some sceptical feelings. Scepticism must be the natural effect of the shock to which his mind will be thus exposed. In saying this, we beg not to be hastily condemned as uttering any thing inconsistent with the proper reverence due to the Scriptures; for no one can hold them in higher estimation than we do. We would gladly send all men to them as to a copious fountain of pure and heavenly truth. But we loudly protest against the superstitions which prevail concerning their true nature, as compositions, as writings; being convinced that these superstitions are among the most frequent causes of scepticism. Men look into these books expecting to find them totally unlike all other human compositions; to meet with nothing obscure, nothing trifling, nothing which is not fraught with the expression of divine wisdom and heavenly purity; nothing, in short, but the immediate language of the Holy Spirit of God. What is the natural, the inevitable con-

sequence, when upon the perusal of the Scriptures they feel, (as they must, if they are not wholly destitute of common sense and reason,) that these expectations are not realized? The consequence is disappointment, disgust, scepticism. They are perplexed and confounded, and seek relief in doubt and hesitation respecting the character which they have heard assigned to these writings. Christians might remove this cause of scepticism, if, whilst they consistently maintain their faith in the principles, discoveries, and instructions of the sacred books, they would abandon their present groundless superstitions respecting the plenary inspiration of those writings, considered *as* writings. It is the truth, the wisdom contained in the Scriptures, which is divine; not the language in which that truth is conveyed, nor the numberless matters of ordinary import with which it is there intermingled.

We shall briefly mention, as another principal cause of scepticism, a general weakness and unskilfulness of judgment in dealing with *moral* evidence. We may perhaps be charged with self-delusion in this case; but we cannot help thinking, that we see this peculiar deficiency of judgment strikingly exhibited in the language and opinions of most sceptics. They seem to us not to know when an historical fact, or a proposition of any kind depending on moral evidence, is proved. They appear not to be aware, that in questions of this nature there will always be much to be said *against* as well as *for* the truth; and from this inexperience in judging of such matters, their minds are distracted and held in suspense without any real occasion. In particular, they do not appear to understand the proper logical value of *objections*. They seem to think that every objection must be fatal which cannot be directly and fully answered, whatever positive evidence there may be for the truth objected against. But this is a great mistake; as they will soon find, if they apply their false principle to matters of undoubted history and universally acknowledged fact. One of the most accomplished reasoners of the present age, Dr. Whately, wrote an ironical attempt to prove that the achievements recorded of Napoleon Buonaparte, and even the existence of such a man, were wholly incredible. It was our impression at the time of reading it, and we are scarcely inclined to abandon the feeling now, that his objections to the most noto-

rious occurrences of modern days, are more plausible and more weighty, than those which are commonly urged against Christianity. We would recommend the perusal of that acute performance, as a sovereign remedy for scepticism arising from this particular defect of judgment. Men should learn to discriminate between objections to the fact, or the truth itself sought to be established, and objections to the evidence by which it is established. The former class of objections may always be found in abundance, on all moral questions; but they will not have much weight with a sound and skilful reasoner, *provided the positive evidence be clear and ample*. This we apprehend to be the case with Christianity; and therefore we look upon scepticism as unreasonable.

It must surely be admitted, that this sceptical state of mind in regard to divine revelation, is by no means favourable either to virtue or to happiness. The evil of its influence will differ much, according to men's dispositions and circumstances. To the young, and to all whose virtuous habits and propensities are in a great measure unformed, it is likely to be especially dangerous. It is an unstable, anxious, chilling state of mind. It must naturally tend to occasion feebleness and inconsistency of character. We would earnestly exhort all who are subject to it, without delay to seek after its removal, by a more patient, a more serious, and a more unprejudiced attention to the subject, than they have probably hitherto given. And we would exhort all Christian believers, to be careful that they do not cast a stumbling block in their brother's way, that they do not expose rational minds to the many evils of scepticism, by their erroneous profession of the divine religion of the Gospel. Beyond a doubt, of all the intellectual and moral possessions with which the soul of man can be enriched, an earnest, well-grounded faith in the truth and divinity of the Christian religion, is the fairest and the best. This persuasion gives a new interest to existence, makes the path of duty and of happiness the same, alleviates the sorrows of life, and dissipates the gloom of death. This reveals the glorious prospect of immortality, and sets a prize before us worthy of being contended for through good report and evil report, through difficulty and temptation and trial. Let none be heedlessly guilty of depriving themselves or others of such an inestimable blessing.



“AWAKE, THOU THAT SLEEPEST,—AND CHRIST SHALL  
GIVE THEE LIGHT.”—EPH. v. 14.

Awake! awake! arouse thee from thy sleep!  
The beams of TRUTH are lighting up the sky:  
The slumbers of thy soul, so dark and deep,  
No more must dim thy mind, or cloud thine eye.

Gird on thy Gospel-armour once again:  
Both men and angels will applaud thy plan:  
Awake! awake! shake off the cumb'rous chain  
Forg'd by the craft and subtlety of man.

Dost thou not hear the music from the sky  
By angels and archangels borne along?—  
It brings “*good-news*,” “*glad-tidings*,” from on high—  
Awake! awake! and listen to the song.

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“*I am awake!*—I see a flood of light  
Chasing the mists of ERROR fast away;  
Blessing the sick with health, the blind with sight,  
And turning mental darkness into day!

“*I am awake!*—I hear the sacred song  
Proclaiming “*pardon*,” “*peace, good-will on earth*,”  
Rousing the Nations as it rolls along,  
And giving to the world “*a second birth!*”

“*I am awake!*—I will not sleep again,  
Nor yield my birth-right to “*The Powers that be!*”  
The prison door is burst,—the broken chain  
Is cast aside,—and “*GOD hath made me free!*”

*Wareham.*

## CHARGES AGAINST UNITARIANS.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—As you have chosen the very appropriate language of the Apostle for the motto of your valuable publication, ‘In the defence and confirmation of the Gospel,’ I am induced to trouble your readers with a few observations on charges recently preferred against us, which I hope will not be deemed inadmissible in a work professedly devoted to the advocacy of the great and glorious principles which Christ unfolded, which the Apostles proclaimed, and which it is our duty as faithful disciples to defend and promote.

‘They are the most dangerous of all Sectarians,’ said a Right Rev. Prelate, on a recent occasion, when speaking of Unitarians. A grave, though a very common charge; but being proclaimed *ex cathedrâ*, is not to be passed over in silence. Misrepresentation is ever rapid in its progress, and when poured forth from mitred stations, goes abroad with lightning speed, and is gladly welcomed wherever prejudice reigns. Cicero truly observes, ‘*nihil est tam volucre quam maledictum; nihil facilius emittitur, nihil citius excipitur, nihil latius dissipatur.*’ Impressed with this truth, it behoves us to be vigilant in counteracting the arts of detraction. We are aware that it is nothing new to us to be spoken against, but this will not justify a timid reserve. Are we to stand tamely by, while branded with unmerited obloquy? Are we to be silent and unmoved while our best and noblest interests are held up to derision, and the most shameless and palpable falsehoods propagated to render us objects of universal hatred? No! but while we are imperatively called upon to defend ourselves against unjust accusations, we would scorn to wield any unrighteous weapons. The doctrines in which we believe and rejoice, emanate from the Divine Being, and they are the dictates of his holy word, and in defending or asserting them, we have need of no other weapon than ‘the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;’ and in meeting the accusations of our opponents, it is our earnest endeavour to reply calmly and dispassionately, reasonably and charitably. In this way would we meet the charges preferred against us, by a distinguished Prelate of the Established Church.

Why are we the most dangerous of all Sectarians? Where is the foundation for this sweeping charge? Is there any thing in our character, or doctrine, injurious to the moral or spiritual interests of society? Do we burn incense at the shrine of mammon? Do we labour to enrich ourselves by contracting the happiness of others? Do we set forth vice in the garb of virtue? Do we in any way minister to the world's taste for pomp and distinction, or encourage pride and arrogance? Do we labour to check the improvement of the human race, by keeping them in the bonds of ignorance and superstition? Do we in any way contribute to the degradation and misery of mankind; Do we teach the heart-withering scepticism, that Christianity is a fable, and immortality a dream? None of these things can be laid to our charge. Why then are we the most dangerous of all Sectarians? All that could be gathered from the Right Reverend Prelate's observations in proof of his assertion, was, that Unitarians deny the hallowed mysteries OF OUR CHURCH, lower the character of our Divine Redeemer, and reject his atonement? More than this was to be expected from one who has the skill of amplification; but it was deemed sufficient for his purpose, and will suffice for ours.

In the first place we plead guilty to the charge of denying the hallowed mysteries of our Church? The Church to which we belong inculcates no mysteries. Our head is Christ. The New Testament assures us that he was invested by God with authority to exercise dominion over the Church. In the Church of England, Christ is divested of this power, the sceptre is wrested from his hands, and given to the Civil Magistrate, who is declared in the laws which relate to the dominant Church, to be the supreme head, vested with all power to exercise all manner of ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical persons, have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by and under the King's Majesty, who hath full power and authority to hear and determine all manner of causes ecclesiastical, and to reform and correct all vice, sin, errors, heresies, enormities, abuses whatsoever, which by any manner of spiritual authority, or jurisdiction, ought or may be lawfully reformed.\* As the disciples and servants of Jesus Christ,

\* Vide 26th Henry 8, cap. 1. 37. Henry 8, cap. 17.

we have nothing to do with such a Church, for it usurps the authority and invades the dominion of our Saviour, who is proclaimed, in the Gospel, as the only King in Zion. We are therefore bound to obey Christ, and not the Civil Magistrate, in things which pertain to our salvation. The command of our Divine Master still sounds in our ears, with irresistible conviction, 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, but unto God, the things which are God's.' Are we then to be reproached for denying 'the hallowed mysteries' of human invention? The doctrines of the Gospel are as plain, as they are perfect; they are not wrapped in mystery, but clothed with simplicity; they were addressed to the meanest, and have illuminated and dignified the most exalted capacities. When first proclaimed by the Son of God, they contained every necessary article of faith and practice which all could comprehend and exemplify. If they are now obscure and inscrutable to the understanding, the blame rests with those who have perverted them, to serve other purposes than those of man's redemption. We admit that the Book of Common Prayer has its mysteries, but the Bible has none. This is our guide, and we dare not abandon it for another which is foreign to its sacred character and spirit. In answer, therefore, to the *grave* charge of denying the mysteries of the Established Church, we reply in the venerable words of the holy Apostles to the Jewish rulers 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye?'

CHRISTIANUS.

### ON FALSE AND TRUE DEVOTION.

The devout and benevolent Fenelon has a remark in one of his writings, upon the selfishness of seeking God, when we have nothing else to turn to. The observation is one which is exemplified, on every hand, by the most cursory inspection of the characters and events of society. Afflictions make more converts than gratitude; and this, in all likelihood, is one principal reason, for which afflictions enter so largely into the life and discipline of man. Chastened and depressed by the heavy hand of adversity, careless of human sympathy and hopeless of human aid, men turn at length to Him, whom, while 'His hand was

over them for good,' they had almost forgotten, and to whom they now have recourse in their hour of darkness, only because they have no other refuge in the world. All impulses, indeed, are good, which lead us to God; but they differ greatly in their degrees of relative goodness; and those which have been mentioned, are obviously of the mere selfish kind. A piety emanating from gratitude in happiness, will be most likely to sustain us, when that happiness is blighted or blasted; but the piety which grows out of the hopelessness of human aid, will often be found, upon a return of good fortune, to relapse back again from God to the world. The piety of 'The sweet singer of Israel' was of the former and nobler kind. It grew out of the roots of his early and happy days, when, in the midst of his happiness he remembered his Creator, and taught the mountains of Judah to echo the name and the praise of the Spirit who made them. The psalter is rich in compositions of the shepherd-king, which express, with all the ardour of devotion, his thankfulness for his own blessings, and for the blessings of his people. 'Sweet to him were the meditations' of his God, as the cause of the 'goodness and mercy, which had followed him all the days of his life.' Gratitude found its expression and relief in thanksgivings. He 'loved his God, because his God had first loved him;' and in his many bright hours of prosperity and success, he called upon 'his glory,' to 'awake' and praise. We find, accordingly, as we might have expected, that the piety thus generated by thankfulness for the blessings of life, was a refuge which failed him not in the time of trouble and of suffering, and that the psalms, which he composed at those afflictive seasons, were still replete with inextinguishable praise, and speak of hope in the very abandonment of sorrow. A striking and affecting example of this is given in the forty-second psalm. It represents the poet of God, under some unknown affliction, as turning for refuge to Him, who had 'never left him nor forsaken him,' and who (he deeply felt) would never leave nor forsake him. He rebukes his own despondency; he expresses his unfailing trust; his 'soul panteth for his God, as the hart for the water-brooks.' The whole affecting strain evinces, in every part of it, that the piety which it displays, was not of that imperfect and selfish kind, which originates in the mere conviction that 'vain is the help of man,' but of



that more perfect and ennobling description, which is called forth by the blessings of heaven, to sustain us under its trials. Devotion is evidently no new state of mind, induced by the occasion, and with the occasion to pass away;—but a *habit* of thought and feeling, for the fountains of which we must go back far into the past of his being, and the waters of which, whether they flow under the olive or the cypress, though they may and must differ in the beauty or gloom of their reflections, are yet in purity and in melody essentially the same. The expression of thanksgiving in happiness gives birth and place to that of resignation in sorrow; and, if that resignation is not, strictly speaking, the resignation of Christianity, we have the more to wonder at the sublimity of those views, which so far anticipated ‘the visitings of the day-spring from on high.’

In the imagery employed at the commencement of that psalm, it is obvious to remark, that the devout aspirations, which it so visibly expresses, are of the most impassioned and enthusiastic kind;—‘As the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.’ To feel the full weight and force of such language, it would be necessary that we should be acquainted, more than we are or ever shall be, with the climate and temperature of the lands of the morning. We live in a country, where we can traverse no district that is not watered by springs and intersected by rivers. The ear is never long unsoothed by the sound of waters, or the eye unrefreshed by their near or distant gleamings. But in the eastern countries, the case is essentially different; and the remembrance of this difference alone can give us the fullest comprehension we can attain to, of much of the imagery, and that the most beautiful imagery, in the Scriptures. In those sultry regions, thirst is one of the deepest agonies of life. A river is there a splendid rarity; a fountain is more precious than a mine of diamonds; and the sinking of a well is a work for the munificence of a king. In traversing the long and often shadeless waste, the heart of the pilgrim (in the fine language of the Scriptures) ‘faints within him,’ with longings for the fresh and sparkling element; and there are moments, in which, like the rich man in the parable, he would give all that he has, to ‘dip his finger in water, and cool the tip of his tongue.’ The application,

therefore, of imagery derived from these feelings, indicates that those which it is employed to illustrate, are of the most intense and inexpressible kind—such as required the use of the most powerful figures and expressions within the range of human experience and language, to do them even that imperfect justice, which can be done by words and images to the workings of the mind.

The devotion of grief has its enthusiasm, no less than the devotion of joy; and we must conceive of the psalmist, as having been under their fullest influence, when he struck forth the impassioned words, which have been just before referred to;—‘As the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God? Nothing, in the whole range of language, could have expressed more adequately the yearnings of a devout and suffering heart for a fuller and more perfect communion with that Being, from whom no calamity could withdraw its sublime affiance, and no sorrow alienate its inextinguishable love. Even in those trying moments, the most powerful imagery is scarcely sufficiently powerful, to body forth the trusting faith with which he still clung to ‘the Lord his God,’—under the influence of which he rebukes his own despondency, calls upon sorrow for hope, and upon pain itself for praise.

Happy would it be (if human beings may so express themselves respecting that which is inconsistent with the actual appointments of Omniscience)—happy would it be, for the world, if all, or more, possessed these feelings, with the same, or any degree of intensity and ardour! But nature herself, by her own irreversible decrees, has placed this in many and very different degrees within the choice and power of her children. Men come into being with very different modifications of organic, intellectual, and spiritual power. A devotional temperament, in its superior forms, is a gift which is born with us, and the deficiency of which we cannot fully supply. Like the original tendencies of our nature, it is inherited by different men in very different degrees; and though few or none are born with *no* susceptibilities of devotion, there are numbers in whom they are of relatively difficult excitement, and who require that a stronger wind should breathe upon the wings of the spirit, before it can be tempted to spread them for the sky.

The remembrance that these things are so, may tend greatly to relieve the reflective and the conscientious from misgivings, which cannot but carry with them some portion of pain. They cannot be blind to the certainty, that there are numbers of their fellow-beings, whose devotional susceptibilities are altogether of a more ardent character, and in whom it appears rather an act of instinct than of volition, to pour out their spirits in the raptures of praise and of prayer. They who see this in others, look in vain within themselves for any corresponding ardour and enthusiasm of devotion. Minds delicately organized, (though not in *this* particular,) have been often and deeply pained by observing this difference, without sufficiently attending to its cause. Observations of this kind are more peculiarly painful and dangerous, when they are made by those, who have imbibed erroneous impressions of religion. Early taught to believe that the vitality of faith is in part evinced and determined by this enthusiasm of feeling,—and conscious, at the same time, that, if they themselves experience such bursts of enthusiasm at all, they are felt with less fervour, endure less long, and return more rarely,—they are enforced by their unfortunate opinions, to imagine that the influential visitings of heaven are more or less withdrawn from them, and that the Evil One is busy within them to harden their hearts against their God. In the young and the susceptible, these impressions have produced the most disastrous effects upon their health and peace, their usefulness and their reason. Melancholy has led to madness, despondency to despair: and the asylum or the grave have opened their pitying arms, to receive the early victims of ‘terrors’ that are *not* ‘of the Lord.’ Early death and blighted life have attested, and are still attesting, around us, the power of these withering errors upon spirits that have been cast in too fine a mould, to endure the workings of the tremendous fears which overcome them. Yet did they, or could they reflect, upon that which has occasioned those fears, they would vanish as certainly before the touch of inquiry, as the spectres of the moonlight become branches and trunks, when we venture to scrutinize the object of our momentary terrors. It will then be apparent, that though *all* endowments are finally the gifts of God, there is nothing *supernatural* in the differences, which thus appal them;—that

different individuals are born with different degrees of devotional susceptibility, as they are born with different degrees of talent, of strength, and of beauty;—and that the deficiency of religious enthusiasm is no more indicative of the workings of the Evil One in the soul, than the deficiency of mental capacity, or of personal attraction. Any other original and constitutional difference might as justly be considered and deplored as a mark of the lost favour of God, as those, to which such disastrous misconceptions are annexed, and the effects of which we see so often in a joyless life and a hopeless grave. To be ‘worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth,’ it is by no means necessary, that we should feel, or even be capable of feeling, the ardours which are so often mistaken for the manifestations and influences of God, ‘moving upon the face of the waters’ of the soul, and filling their deep abysses with the energies of motion and of life. This is by no means indispensable to the worship of God, to the performance of His will, or to the attainment of the prize of the high ‘vocation with which we are called.’ Our Father in heaven is not ‘an austere Master, gathering where He has not strawed, and reaping where he has not sown,’ but a benign and pitying Judge, who will only require from us according to what we have received, and call each man to account for the talents entrusted to him—and for no more. None, therefore, are justified in desponding or despairing, because others are gifted with a more devotional temperament than themselves. None have reason to fear that the favour of God has passed from them for ever, because, on consulting their own actual experiences, and comparing them with what they know of the experiences of others, they discover that their devotional feelings are less easily excited, that they rise upon a feebler wing and glow with a fainter fire. Let them not despond. Despondency is a shackle upon all exertion. They, who despond or despair respecting the real or imagined inferiority of their spiritual endowments, deprive themselves of the power of supplying their own deficiencies, by a vigorous application to the work of self improvement.

*(To be concluded in the next number.)*

## MODERN PRETENSIONS TO SUPERNATURAL GIFTS.

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AMONG the most remarkable events of a religious nature that have occurred of late years in this country, has doubtlessly been the pretended revival of the supernatural spiritual gifts of the primitive church among certain religious professors, in London and elsewhere. About four years ago two or three persons, resident at Port Glasgow, in Scotland, were thought by themselves and others about them to manifest once more the ancient and long withholden gifts of prophesying and speaking in unknown tongues, under a direct impulse of the Spirit. The circumstance becoming talked of, attracted the attention of some of the followers of the celebrated Edward Irving, then minister of the Scotch Church in London, and who were already well prepared by the tone of that gentleman's preaching, to give easy credence to any thing that would indicate the near approach of the second coming of Christ. These parties, in consequence, visited Scotland, became witnesses of the supposed manifestations, and were fully convinced, from what they saw and heard, of the reality of a supernatural work. On their return to London, it was not long before a similar influence began to display itself among the members of Mr. Irving's congregation, commencing, we believe, in the persons of some of the ladies, who had visited the North. Previously to this, some persons of the same company had imagined themselves to have received the gifts of healing; but the manifestations now developed were of a different kind, and consisted of *utterances*, which from the peculiar feelings of which the speakers declared themselves conscious, as well as from their extraordinary tone and violence, were deemed supernatural. What was uttered was generally expressed in English, and then consisted of abrupt and frequently repeated religious ejaculations, for the most part importing the near approach of the extraordinary judgments attending the Messiah's second advent, with appropriate rebukes and exhortations. At other times, the utterances were not in English, but consisted either of broken phrases of Hebrew, Latin, or some other language of which the parties may be supposed to have some knowledge; or, which was more common, of a jargon of sounds referable to no known language, and to which neither speakers nor



hearers could attach any intelligible meaning whatever. The parties concerned; however, were so impressed with the extraordinary excitement, the commanding and even appalling energy, and the peculiar manner and tone, of these utterances *in power*, as they called them, that they sought no further proof of their being produced by a direct spiritual or supernatural agency. To those who gave them forth, their own inward sensations appeared to be quite convincing. On the first occasion of their experiencing *the power*, and ever after, they appeared to be conscious of something quite distinct from all emotions, however energetic, of which they had ever before been the subjects.

We will not however any further pursue the description of these occurrences in our own words, because it is our purpose, on the present occasion, to make somewhat copious extracts from a work lately published by a gentleman who was one of the principal actors in these singular scenes, and who appears to write with an honest intention of putting the world fairly in possession of all the facts of the case, as far as he was acquainted with them. He could truly say—"Quæ ipse miserrima vidi, et quorum pars magna fui." We think that the religious public is under much obligation to an author who in this manner, in defiance of the ridicule to which he inevitably exposes himself, comes boldly forward with so graphic a detail of the workings of religious delusion. Not all minds are subject to the same infirmities; but among that portion of society who are in earnest in religion, the tendency to one or other variety of enthusiasm is always strong; and an exposure such as the present may be the means of delivering many from a snare into which they were about unsuspectingly to fall.

Mr. Robert Baxter, a respectable Solicitor of Doncaster, a gentleman of very religious habits, and already known to the public as a warm friend to the Establishment by a work entitled the "*Layman's Appeal*," acquaints us, in the following words, with the state of his mind, when he first heard the report of the spiritual gifts in Scotland.\*

\* "Narrative of Facts characterizing the Supernatural Manifestations in members of Mr. Irving's congregation, and other individuals, in England and Scotland, and formerly in the writer himself." By Robert Baxter, 8vo.

"Conceiving, as I did, and still do, that there is no warrant in Scripture for limiting the manifestations of the Spirit to apostolic times; and deeply sensible of the growth of infidelity in the face of the Church, and of the prevalence of formality and lukewarmness within it; I was ready to examine the claims of inspiration, and even anxious for the presence of the gifts of the Spirit, according, as it seemed to me, to that apostolic command, *covel earnestly the best gifts*. I longed greatly, and prayed much, for such an outpouring and testimony. When I saw, as it seemed to me, proof that those who claimed the gifts were walking honestly, and that the power manifested in them was *evidently supernatural*, and moreover bore testimony to *Christ come in the flesh*, I welcomed it at once, as the work of God, though it was long before I publicly spoke of it."

In saying *publicly*, he appears to refer to the reading and teaching among the poor, to which he was accustomed.

"At this period, he continues, "I was, by professional arrangements, called up to London, and had a strong desire to attend at the prayer-meetings, which were then privately held by those who sought for the gifts. Having obtained an introduction, I attended; *my mind fully convinced that the power was of God, and prepared, as such, to listen to the utterances*. After one or two brethren had read and prayed, Mr. T—— was made to speak two or three words very distinctly, and with an energy and depth of tone which seemed to me extraordinary, and it fell upon me as a supernatural utterance, which I ascribed to the power of God; the words were in a tongue I did not understand. In a few minutes Miss E. C. broke out in an utterance in English, which as to matter and manner, and the influence it had upon me, *I at once bowed to as the utterance of the Spirit of God*. Those who have heard the powerful and commanding utterance need no description; but they who have not, may conceive what an unnatural and unaccustomed tone of voice, an intense and rivetting power of expression, with the declaration of a cutting rebuke to all who were present, and applicable to my own state of mind in particular,—would effect upon me, and upon the others who were come together expecting to hear the voice of the Spirit of God."

What this effect was he more particularly recounts in a letter written soon after to his brother, a Clergyman.

"The prophesying was upon the near coming of the Lord, and rebuking those who did not faithfully declare it. I found laid open the very misgivings of conscience with which I have for the last six months been exercised. The effect upon me was, that tears ran down my cheeks: and my anguish of soul increasing, I was obliged to hide my face, and as far as I could, suppress my groanings. This however only lasted a few minutes, when the power of the Spirit was so great upon me, that I was constrained to cry out, as in an agony, for pardon, and for strength to bear a faithful testimony. In these cryings I was, at the time, conscious of a power of utterance carrying me beyond the natural expressions of my feelings; a constrained utterance, not my own; and a power and presence of the Spirit quite unutterable in a natural way. After this I was

silent ; but, with composure of mind, my whole body was convulsively agitated ; and for the space of more than ten minutes, I was, as it were, paralysed under a shaking of my limbs. During this period I had no other consciousness than of the bodily emotion, and an inexpressible constraint upon my mind, which though it kept me composed, and sensible of all I was doing, yet prevented my utterance, and gave no distinct impression beyond a desire to pray for the knowledge of the Lord's will. This increased so much, that I was led to fall on my knees, and cry in a loud voice, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth : " and this I repeated many times, until the same power of the Spirit which I had before felt, came upon me, and I was made to cry out, with great vehemence both of tone and action, that *the coming of the Lord should be declared, and that all the earth should hear it.* At this moment a gentleman present came to me and laid hold of me, begging me to rise and compose myself ; and whispering to me that it was the work of the flesh, and that he himself had been once in the same state ; that nobody ought to speak except in perfect composure of body and mind. When he stopped me, I said almost unconsciously, "thank you, thank you," for I was under such a painful constraint, that every word I uttered was, as it were, wrung from me."

In the account here given, we suspect that the judicious reader will see nothing more than a description of a high religious excitement, such as often has occurred in fanatical assemblies, and often will again. We refrain, however, from any remarks at present, as we wish to reserve such as we have to make, till we have gone through the narrative. Mr. Baxter continues—

"I was overwhelmed by this occurrence. The attainment of the gift of prophecy, which this supernatural utterance was deemed to be, was with myself and many others a great object of desire. I could not therefore but rejoice in having been made the subject of it, yet I was so anxious and distressed lest I should mistake the mind of God in the matter, that I continued many weeks weighed down in spirit and overwhelmed. There was in me at the time of utterance very great excitement ; and yet I was distinctly conscious of a power acting upon me beyond the mere power of excitement. So distinct was this power from the excitement, that in all my trouble and doubt about it, I never could attribute the whole to that cause."

It appears that up to this time no utterances had been allowed in the congregation, but only in meetings strictly private. Mr. Baxter, however, declared the impropriety of thus shutting up the manifestations, and soon after Mr. Irving, yielding, as he seems to have been very ready to do, to the prophetic admonitions with which he imagined his church to be favoured, permitted the public exercise of all the gifts. It was at this time his custom to hold meetings at the Scotch church very early every morning.

These meetings were opened by the pastor with singing and prayer, after which he called on every one present, minister or laymen, whom from personal knowledge he thought proper, to read and pray. It was in this way that the religious zeal of the people was elicited.

Our author in the mean time had returned into the country, where, though he had no public utterances, the power continued, as he says, to come down upon him occasionally, when engaged in private prayer. One of these occasions he describes, and we must confess rather startled us at the somewhat exorbitant, and ambitious character of his spiritual requisitions. The apostle certainly tells us to covet the *best* gifts, but not, as we remember, all gifts at once. He tells us that while struggling one day with wandering thoughts, his soul was suddenly lifted up to God, and calmness given to him.

“By a constraint I cannot describe, I was made to speak, at the same time shrinking from utterance and rejoicing in it. The utterance was a prayer that the Lord would have mercy upon me, and deliver me from fleshly weakness, and would graciously bestow upon me the gifts of his spirit, ‘the gift of wisdom, the gift of knowledge, the gift of faith, the working of miracles, the gift of healing, the gift of prophesy, the gift of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues; and that he would open my mouth, and give me strength to declare his glory.’ This prayer was forced from me by the constraint of the power that acted upon me; and the utterance was so loud, that I put the handkerchief to my mouth to stop the sound, that I might not alarm the house. When I had reached the last word I have written, the power died off me, and I was left just as before, save in amazement at what had passed, and filled, as it seemed to me, with thankfulness to God for his great love so manifested to me. With the power there came upon me a strong conviction,—‘this is the spirit of God, and what you are asking will therefore be surely given you.’ This conviction, strong as it was at the moment, was never shaken, until the whole work fell to pieces; but from that day I acted in the full assurance, that in God’s own good time, all these gifts would be bestowed upon me.”

As far as regarded the gift of prophecy, our author, it seems, did not wait long for what he deemed an answer to his prayer. Returning to London in the beginning of 1832, he went to spend an evening at a friend’s, with the pastor, and some of the gifted persons.

“After prayer, Mrs. J. C. was made to testify, that now was the time of the great struggle and power of Satan in the midst of us; that now we must take to ourselves the whole armour of God, and stand up against him, for he was coming in like a flood upon the church, and fearful was his power. Afterwards the power fell upon



me, and I was made to speak for two hours and upwards, with very little interval, and gave forth what we all regarded as prophecies concerning the church and the nation; declaring God's anger against the nation for its wickedness and infidelity, and that he had sent a pestilence, and smitten in the bowels for abasing pride, and that the land would be as a charnel house for the multitude of the slain. On the church the denouncements against the unfaithful pastors were most fearful, and that it was flowing on into the power of the enemy. These prophecies were mingled with others most glorious and gracious, as they appeared to us; declaring that the spirit should be abundantly poured forth, and a faithful and mighty people should be gathered in this land; that the Lord was at hand, and the signs of his coming all around us. The power which then rested on me was far more mighty than before, laying down my mind and body in perfect obedience, and carrying me on without confusion or excitement. Excitement there might appear to a by-stander, but to myself it was calmness and peace. The things I was made to utter flashed in upon my mind without forethought, without expectation; all was the work of the moment, and I was as the passive instrument of the power that used me."

A circumstance occurred soon afterwards to our author, that might well have shaken his confidence in these impressions. One day after breakfast

"Mr. Irving remarked that Mr. T. when in the Court of Chancery, had found the power mighty upon him, but never a distinct impulse to utterance. Whilst he was speaking on it, I was made in power to declare, 'there go I, and thence to the prison house.' This was followed by a prophecy, that a testimony should that day be borne before the Chancellor which should make the nation tremble: that I was to go and bear this testimony, and for the testimony should be cast into prison: that the world had now the possession of the visible church, and that she was now so provoking the Lord, and quenching the Spirit, that he had cast her off: that it was necessary a spiritual minister should bear testimony before the conscience-keeper of the head of this church, and then the abomination of desolation would be set up, and every man must flee to the mountains. The power upon me was overwhelming. I gave all present a solemn benediction, as though I was departing altogether from among them, and forbidding Mr. Irving, who rose to speak to me as I was going, went out and shaped my way to the court of the Chancellor.

"As I went towards the court, the sufferings and trials I underwent were almost beyond endurance. Might it not be a delusion? Ought I not to consider my own character in the sight of the world which would be forfeited by such an act; and the ruin of all worldly prospects, which would ensue from it? But confident that the power speaking in me was of God, it seemed my duty to obey at every sacrifice. In this mind I went on, expecting as I entered the court, the power would come upon me. I knew not what I was to say, but supposed, that as on all other occasions, the subject and utterance would be together given. When I entered no power came on me. I stood in the court before the Chancellor



for three or four hours, momentarily expecting the power to come on me : and at length came out convinced there was nothing for me to say. I left the court under the conviction that I had been deluded, and went at once to Mr. Irving, who, anxious as to the issue of my mission, welcomed me as delivered from prison. I said to him, 'We are snared, we are deceived ; I had no message before the Chancellor.' He enquired particulars, but could give no solution. He said, 'we must wait.' I observed to him, 'If the work in me is of the enemy, what will you say of the rest who have so joined us, and borne witness of me ?' 'True,' said he, 'but theirs has been tried in every way.' He then mentioned the trials."

Among these trials Mr. Irving related to him the following—

"A man, a stranger to the Scotch church, came up from the country, and spoke in power in the midst of the congregation. He was rebuked, and afterwards being called into the vestry, Mr. T., with Mr. Irving, reasoned with him, to show him, from the nature of his utterance, that the power could not be of God. The man was obstinate, and would not yield, when suddenly Mr. T. was made to speak to him in an unknown tongue, in a tone of rebuke, and the man fell down upon the ground crying for mercy. Afterwards he went to two others of the gifted persons at their own houses ; and wishing to come in and speak to them, he was again rebuked in the power ; and, as if by the force of the word, was cast down upon the ground, foaming and struggling like a bound demoniac. The gifted persons were then made to pray for him, and he became calm, and went away. The first part of this scene Mr. Irving told me himself as an eye-witness, and the second part was told me afterwards by one of the gifted persons before whom it took place. Of the accuracy of it I can feel no doubt."

Though troubled at this failure, Mr. Baxter's confidence in his new gifts was too strong to be overthrown by it, and by the help of the prophetess he was enabled to explain away the difficulty. "An utterance came from Miss E. C. 'It is discernment ye seek:—seek ye for it.' " The power then enabled him to discern that he had indeed borne testimony, though a silent one, and that he had gone to prison, in the form of dejection of spirit, ever since. This explanation was deemed quite satisfactory, and thus the prophet's credit was sacred!!

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We shall give the conclusion of Mr. Baxter's narrative in our next number, together with some remarks of our own on this singular exhibition of fanaticism.

## THE SCRIPTURE INTERPRETER.---No. IV.

*Matthew, xxviii. v. 19.*

OUR Saviour, having been raised from the dead, and being about to ascend into heaven, gave his apostles a solemn commission to go forth and preach the Gospel, after his departure. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This passage is considered by most Trinitarians as clear evidence of their doctrine, that three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are each truly and properly God. But we must inquire—What is the nature of this supposed evidence? On what principle is it to be inferred, that because the three are here mentioned together, therefore each is a divine person, each is truly and properly God? It is easy enough, (if men can be satisfied with such a loose and careless method of argument) to quote the passage in which the three names occur in succession, and then at once to conclude that because the Father is God, therefore the Son and the Holy Ghost are likewise God. But before we can assent to such an astounding doctrine, we require to be shown distinctly on what grounds the conclusion rests. Surely it will not be contended, that the mere connexion, the mere juxta-position, of the names of several parties, in reference to the same circumstance or the same action, proves them to be equal? If so, we shall be obliged to believe in many more Gods than three. The apostle Paul says to Timothy for instance (1 Timothy v. v. 21.), "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things." Here is a solemn injunction from an inspired apostle to his convert to observe the precepts he had given him; and the injunction is enforced by an appeal to three parties, God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels. Does it follow, that not only the Lord Jesus Christ, but the elect angels also, are equal with God? Again, we read, (1 Chron. xxix, v. 20.) "All the congregation bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the king." And again, (1 Samuel xii, v. 18.) "All the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel." Here, Jehovah and king David, Jehovah and Samuel, are mentioned together, in reference to solemn acts of worship and fear from the whole Jewish people. Does it follow, that David and

Samuel are divine Beings, co-equal with Jehovah? Every one will instantly reply, that it would be absurd to entertain such a thought. We readily grant that it would; but in our conscience, we do not perceive that it is at all less absurd, to infer from the mention of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the baptismal commission, that each is to be regarded as God. The circumstances in this latter case are not a whit more solemn and peculiar than in the former cases. Worship, and holy fear, and a charge to obey the divine precepts of the Gospel, are quite equal in solemnity to the initiatory rite of baptism. The Israelites worshiped Jehovah and David their king, but in different senses; the one with divine honours as their Almighty Maker, the other with humble obeisance as their earthly ruler, the chosen servant of God to reign over them. The apostle Paul charged Timothy to be obedient to his instructions, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels;—but in different senses; before the one as his Creator and heavenly Father, before the other as his appointed Lord and Master through faith in the Gospel, and before the angels as holy witnesses of his actions. So the apostles were to baptize their converts into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but in different senses, which required no explanation because they were in the apostolic age perfectly well known and understood. They were baptized into the Father, as the Holy and Merciful Being by whom Jesus was sent into the world, the primary Author of all the blessings of the Gospel; they were baptized into Jesus, as the chosen and beloved Son of God, the long-expected Messiah, duly commissioned and qualified by the Father to be the Saviour of the world; they were baptized into the Holy Ghost, the supernatural powers and signs displayed in the apostolic age, as the grand evidence and seal of the truth of the Gospel. This, we humbly conceive, is a rational, sound, and Scriptural mode of interpreting the passage. The notion of Trinitarians, that because the three are mentioned together, in reference to the same religious act, each is therefore properly God, we can regard in no other light than as a very rash and groundless assumption.

If indeed there are any peculiar circumstances in this case, which render the conjunction of the names a proof of the equality of the persons, let us be shewn what these

circumstances are. Some Trinitarians, we know, in order to strengthen their argument, have chosen to represent baptism into any person, or into the name of any person, (which is precisely the same thing), as an act of *supreme worship* towards that person. Therefore, say they, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are here mentioned together as objects of supreme worship, they must all be equally and truly God. But, for this notion that baptism includes an act of supreme worship, or any act of worship at all, there is not the slightest foundation in Scripture. The apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, (1 Corin. x, v. 1-2.) “All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all *baptized unto Moses*, in the cloud and in the sea.” Does he mean that they worshiped Moses? No, surely; but only that they believed and obeyed Moses, as their deliverer sent from God. He says also in the same epistle, (1 Corin. 1, v. 14.) “I thank God that I baptized none of you, lest any should say that I had baptized into my own name!” Had he any fears lest they should suppose he had set himself up as an object of *worship*? Certainly not; but only lest they should suppose he had put himself forward as the object of their *belief*, of their *faith*, instead of Christ. Again, he says to the Romans, (Rom. vi, v. 3, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?”—Does he mean that they had *worshiped* the death of Christ? Assuredly not; but only that they had professed their *belief* in the death of Christ, with all its solemn circumstances and purposes. It thus appears clearly, if the sacred writers, and not Trinitarians, are to be our guides, that there is no act of worship in baptism; but only an acknowledgment of faith in the person or thing, into whose name men are baptized. In the words of our Saviour now under consideration, therefore, there is not the slightest evidence of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead. They are simply an injunction to the apostles, to teach and baptize all nations in the knowledge of the great events on which Christianity is founded,—the mission of Christ from the Father, and the perfect confirmation of his mission by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. These are most certainly the subjects of a Unitarian’s faith.

“WHAT IS FAITH?”

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The closing of the eye  
 In slumbers soft and deep,  
 Remembering who doth spread  
 His arms around our sleep.

What is Faith? The light  
 Upon the orphan's cheek;  
 The voice that turneth into might  
 The sorrow of the weak;

The bowing of the head  
 In the cloudy time of care,  
 The folding of the hands  
 In peace, and hope, and prayer.

The mourner, sitting sadly  
 Beside her cottage-door,  
 Thinking of the merry feet  
 Now parted from her floor;

Again upon her dear child leaneth,  
 She hears again his voice of glee—  
 Canst thou need a sweeter teaching,  
 What thy faith should be?

*(From the Asiatic Journal.)*

## EFFECT OF CONTROVERSIAL PREACHING.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—Should the following be deemed worthy of attention as a fact, its insertion in your excellent little Work will oblige.

Two years ago it was my lot to sojourn for a time in one of the principal cities of the empire. Living in an Episcopalian family, I had but little opportunity of visiting the Unitarian place of worship, or even of learning in what part of the town it was situated. Many had not even heard of such believers, and those who had, regarded them as mere Deists, and laboured hard to convert me to



their opinion. Chance led me to read in a paper, that Lectures were to be delivered on the Unitarian tenets, in the chapel belonging to that sect. The situation of the place of worship was stated: and, accompanied by two of my friends, whose curiosity was strongly excited to know what could be said in favour of this *pernicious* doctrine, I visited the small but neat and simple chapel.

The service was after my own heart; and as the hymn of praise to the *one* true God, the Father, arose from that small sanctuary, precious thoughts crowded on my mind, of an earthly home far distant, and of a heavenly home in which so many of my friends had rest. But the sermon, I must confess, disappointed me; instead of setting forth the pure and holy truths of Christianity as professed by Unitarians, which certainly have the most engaging aspect when fully and simply explained; the preacher attempted in his discourse to upset every strong hold of orthodoxy; spoke against original sin; made a profound statement of the nature of Christ's mediation, (from which one of my friends supposed we did not consider our Saviour as a mediator;) and ended with declaiming against the Deity of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity. The effect was natural. My companions left the chapel disgusted with what they termed real blasphemy; more prejudiced than ever in their own opinions; and determined never again to visit the place. I would ask the preacher if he really intended to take the people by storm? to wage merciless war with those tenets which they had pressed closely to their hearts from childhood? No; the truths of the Gospel must be gradually sown in the heart; we must raise doubts in the minds of those who are not "of us," by the purity of our lives and actions, and by teaching the simple words of the Scripture respecting life, death, and eternity. Instead of everlastingly controverting all other opinions, let us modestly, but fervently, represent our own. Let men deliberately compare the doctrines of Jesus with those of Athanasius, and the light of conviction will burst on their minds, showing them how *miserably* they have wandered in the path of error. Those who know from experience will readily assent to this truth; to others who have not made the trial, I can only say—attempt it.

A CI-DEVANT OBSERVER.

## FAITH AND DISCIPLINE OF THE INDEPENDENTS.

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The class of English Dissenters usually denominated Independents, and sometimes Congregationalists, are undoubtedly in every point of view a highly respectable sect of Christians. The opinions and proceedings of such a body of believers, must at all times be worthy of attention. It appears that the churches, or congregations, belonging to this sect, are united for general purposes, in what they term "The Congregational Union of England and Wales," which holds an annual meeting in London. At the meeting for the present year, (held the 7th, 8th, and 10th of May) they have adopted and published a "Declaration" of their principles of belief and church discipline. We confess that we have been much gratified in reading this document. As might be expected, it contains many positions which, as Unitarians, we deem to be wholly unscriptural and erroneous. But altogether, it has such an air of modesty and candour, so different from the dogmatical pretensions of some churches; it proclaims so many principles which we regard as true and sacred; and even in the statement of what we hold to be false doctrines, it frequently observes such an unusual degree of simplicity and caution, that the perusal of it has given us unfeigned pleasure. We shall present our readers with some extracts, accompanied with a few remarks.

The reasons assigned for drawing up and publishing this "Declaration," struck us as rather curious. They complain that the "Congregational Dissenters have been greatly misunderstood and misrepresented." This is likely enough: we apprehend it is the fate of most sects. But who would have thought that "a large body of their countrymen suppose the Independents to be either *Socinians* or *Methodists*!" Shocking suspicions indeed for any honest men to lie under: we cannot be surprised that our brethren should be so eager to "*declare*," that these terrible imputations upon them are undeserved. It were bad enough to be regarded as *Methodists*; but to be accounted *Socinians*, was truly a reproach not to be borne in silence. We hope "their countrymen" will henceforth do them the justice to acquit them on both charges.

The following "preliminary notes" shew that this people have some fair claim to their title of Independents.

4. It is not intended that the following statement should be put forth with any Authority, or as a standard to which assent should be required.

5. Disallowing the utility of Creeds and Articles of religion as a bond of union, and protesting against subscription to any human formularies, as a term of communion, Congregationalists are yet willing to declare, for general information, what is commonly believed among them; reserving to every one the most perfect liberty of conscience.

6. Upon some minor points of doctrine and practice, they, differing among themselves, allow to each other the right to form an unbiassed judgment of the word of God.

The unity and perfections of God are thus admirably stated :—

II. They believe in one God, essentially wise, holy, just and good; eternal, infinite, and immutable, in all natural and moral perfections; the Creator, Supporter, and Governor of all beings, and of all things.

This gracious and mighty truth cannot be thus clearly acknowledged by a thinking and serious-minded people, without sooner or later causing them to perceive the erroneous nature of some of their other doctrines. Nevertheless, the following is their present account of their faith in the Trinity :—

III. They believe that God is revealed in the Scriptures, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and that to each are attributed the same Divine properties and perfections. The doctrine of the Divine existence, as above stated, they cordially believe, without attempting fully to explain.

We have no wish to deny that there are assertions intended to be made in this Article of the "Declaration," to which we can by no means yield assent. We are fully convinced, that in the Scriptures "the same divine properties and perfections" are *not* ascribed to the Son, as are ascribed to the Father. But still, what a comfortable and refreshing contrast there is, between the above modest statement and the impious jargon of the Athanasian Creed. We suspect that the Sherlocks, the Waterlands, the Owens, and the Howes, of a former generation, would be tempted to lament the decline of orthodoxy, and to exclaim in the bitterness of their hearts, "Is this all?" Weep and howl ye Churchmen! How is the glory of the great mystery obscured in the hands of these timid Sectarians. Fic

upon them ; if they proceed in this way, they will in time render the doctrine of the Trinity quite rational ;—and who then, imbued with the true spirit of orthodoxy, would care to believe it.

Their exposition of the great doctrine of the Atonement, is equally remarkable for the almost total absence of those unwarrantable notions, and that unscriptural phraseology, against which we, their Unitarian opponents, have so often protested.

X. They believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, revealed, either personally in his own ministry, or by the Holy Spirit in the ministry of his apostles, the whole mind of God, for our salvation ; and that by his obedience to the Divine law while he lived, and by his sufferings unto death, he meritoriously “ obtained eternal redemption for us ;” having thereby vindicated and illustrated Divine justice, “ magnified the law,” and “ brought in everlasting righteousness.”

Here is nothing about pacifying the wrath, or making satisfaction to the justice, of God. Our readers will observe that the authors of the “ Declaration,” confine themselves almost entirely, on this topic, to the express words of holy writ. Indeed, although we fear there would be some difference of opinion between us and the Independents, on coming to an explanation of this statement, yet the statement as it stands, is one of which we are scarcely inclined to make the least complaint.

The doctrine of justification through faith in Christ, is stated in an equally simple and almost unexceptionable manner.

XIII. They believe that we are justified through faith in Christ ; as “ the Lord our righteousness,” and not “ by the works of the Law.”

The second part of the “ Declaration,” relates to “ principles of Church order and discipline.” We give their definition of a Christian Church with entire approbation.

I. The Congregational Churches hold it to be the will of Christ that true believers should voluntarily assemble together to observe religious ordinances, to promote mutual edification and holiness, to perpetuate and propagate the Gospel in the world, and to advance the glory and worship of God, through Jesus Christ ; and that each society of believers, having these objects in view in its formation, is properly a Christian Church.

The Independents, at all events, are not likely to be won from the ranks of Dissent by any partial reformation in the national Church. They have principles which

must for ever keep them enemies to any Ecclesiastical Establishment, having an earthly "Head," and claiming "authority to decree rites and ceremonies."

IV. They believe that the New Testament authorizes every Christian Church to elect its own officers, to manage all its own affairs, and to stand independent of, and irresponsible to all authority, saving that only of the Supreme and Divine Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is true that there are some matters of practice recommended in this part of the "Declaration," respecting the admission and rejection of church members, of which we cannot approve, as we fear they must inevitably lead to some infringement of the rights of individual believers. But, on the whole, we see many reasons to hope that the Independents will continue to publish an annual "Declaration of their Faith and Discipline." We like the tone and spirit in which they speak:—there is no dogmatism, no bigotry. Orthodoxy is stripped of half its horrors as they exhibit its tenets. Besides, it is proper that they should thus make known their true principles for their own vindication. It were a thousand pities that such respectable and pious people should be any longer taken for *Socinians*; when it is so plain that they really do believe in the Scriptures, and that they neither blaspheme their God, hate their Saviour, nor consort with devils.

## GOSPEL ADVOCACY.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

### LETTER III.

SIR,—Conviction of the truth, and consequently, of the paramount importance, of the religious opinions we may profess, is needful to their becoming the guiding principles of our conduct. If we adopt them chiefly because they are popular, their influence over us, in many trying situations, in which it would be necessary to our virtue and happiness, would be weak and ineffectual. To conviction must be added firmness of mind. This is required, in a considerable degree, in the person who openly and consistently maintains an unpopular system of faith.

Temptations to conformity with the favoured creed are various and powerful, while the disadvantages arising from



an opposite course are many and disheartening. It is however a cheering fact, that the number of these temptations and disadvantages is much reduced ; and that, owing to the increasing knowledge and better spirit of our times, it is daily becoming less. Time was, when "churches militant" could violate the rights of humanity, and perpetuate every species of wrong, in order to prevent diversity of opinion, which is unavoidable ; but such power to do mischief is departed from them. The spirit of persecution is much abated ; the chief evils of it are gone. Men cannot now inflict pains and penalties upon those who reject the popular faith ; and since the persecutor hath lost the power of punishing "heretics," in the present world, he is obliged to be content with the comparatively harmless employment of threatening them with punishment in the world to come. Nevertheless, dissent from the popular creed entails the disadvantages arising from the ill-will of the prejudiced and bigotted portion of mankind, which, unhappily, forms a considerable body ; and it does, in many respects, cause loss of worldly profit, and in others, loss of "caste," which are oftentimes fertile of discomfort and suffering. For a man, therefore, steadfastly to adhere to a system of opinions, unpopular, misunderstood, and misrepresented, requires considerable firmness of mind, as well as conviction of the truth and excellence of such opinions.

Fashion and popularity are, however, but uncertain supports for any religious system. The people, who should profess a faith from such motives, could not be depended upon for steadfastness and consistency. Support derived hence to a system of faith, might, at any time, be transferred to any other, from the same motives. If the motive for our religious profession be no better, than that it is countenanced by numbers, we shall change with the fashion, and follow the multitude ; we shall not dare to appear in opposition to such influential guides ; not having derived our opinions from examination and conviction, we should not be inspired with those feelings in behalf of them that are necessary to devotedness in any cause we may espouse : Christianity itself, under any existing modification of it, might be abandoned for any other system that should offer a more convenient way to popularity and profit. But how different the case, when the judgment and

affections should be engaged in its support, when we should view the mission of Christ as the result of the Father's love for men, when we should regard the Scriptures as treasures of spiritual knowledge, whence we may become wise unto salvation: what benefits would result, both to ourselves and to the cause of vital godliness, if instead of taking our religious opinions from systems established to suit the policies of the world, and that are consequently more or less popular amongst men, we should repair to the oracles of divine truth, and decide for ourselves: then, we should not be ashamed of our cause; we should not abandon it, although it might be unpopular, and be a source of disadvantage and loss to us; "neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor peril, nor sword, would be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

To persons desirous of discovering religious truth, and of steadfastly adhering thereunto, Christianity offers every facility. It says, "Prove all things, abiding by that which is true." It delivers no man up to the arbitrary control of another, but invites us to judge for ourselves in matters of faith, that we may be able to give to every man that asketh us a reason for the hope that is in us.

C.

## OBITUARY.

DIED, at the Clarence Hotel, Exeter, on Monday, September 2nd, in his 65th year, Joseph Priestley, Esq., of Cradley, Worcestershire, eldest son of Dr. Priestley. The deceased had been several weeks in Devonshire, to visit some relations, and with the hope of benefitting his health by the change of air. Whilst residing a short time at Teignmouth, he had an attack of diarrhoea, and other symptoms indicative of the breaking up of his constitution, which obliged his friends to call in medical assistance. From this attack he had partially recovered, and was on his way homewards, when at Exeter he became worse, and expired in a very calm and gradual manner, on the fourth day after his arrival in that city. His remains were interred in the burial ground belonging to George's Meeting, on Friday, the 6th; and on the following Sunday an appropriate funeral discourse was delivered in that place, by the REV. HENRY ACTON. The death of Mr. Priestley will be sincerely lamented, not only by his afflicted widow and family, but by a large circle of friends, whom his upright and benevolent life had procured for him. He was warmly attached to the religious principles so ably espoused and vindicated by his illustrious parent: and his character was ever such as became his enlightened profession.

DIED on the 13th instant, at Southsea, after a severe illness, the Rev. Joseph Brent, aged 66, who for the last twenty years had been the pastor of the Unitarian General Baptist Church, assembling for public worship in their Meeting-house, St. Thomas-street, Portsmouth, where he succeeded the John Mills, and among whom he laboured as a servant of Christ his master, with zeal and earnestness, much to the satisfaction of his people. The deceased was well known and deservedly respected in the towns and neighbourhood as a Christian minister, who, by his meekness, his earnestness, and his consistent character, adorned his sacred calling. Strongly and happily convinced in his own views of Christian truth, and which proved to him a never failing source of comfort and support through a path chequered with many trials and much affliction,—he ever exemplified in thought, word and deed, the most perfect liberality of mind and heart towards all who as conscientiously differed from him. In the hovels of poverty, and at the bed of sickness, he was a frequent visitor, a welcome comforter, and a kind friend; his charities were many but they were unostentatious; and the poor, many of whom have reason to bless him, have to lament the loss of one who was to them a good Samaritan. The cause of civil and religious liberty always found in him an active, an unflinching supporter, even in those times, now happily past, when those sacred rights were less highly appreciated, because less understood;—whilst few events in his retired but useful life ever gave him more lively pleasure than the accession of Earl Grey and his present compatriots to the councils of their Sovereign. Of him it may be truly said, that his whole life was a practical exemplification of the teachings of his Saviour, and that in his death he well and fully refuted the often repeated calumny,—that men may live, but cannot die, Unitarians.—*Portsmouth Telegraph*, 16th September, 1833.

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## TO SUBSCRIBERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

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No. I. of the "GOSPEL ADVOCATE," HAS NOW BEEN REPRINTED, and copies may be had of the Publisher, or of any other Booksellers by whom the other numbers are supplied.

We have duly received communications from G. B. of Tiverton; from J. W. C. of Plymouth; from Examiner, on the Athanasian Creed; from Evander, &c. &c. We are thankful for all assistance; but of course we cannot promise that every article sent to us shall appear; nor can we always undertake to say at once, of every contribution, whether it shall be inserted or not. Time and circumstances must determine.

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# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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No. V.

NOVEMBER, 1833.

VOL. I.

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## PRESENT CONDITION AND PROSPECTS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE circumstances, internal and external, of our National Episcopal Establishment, afford at the present moment a subject of the deepest interest to every sincere friend of religion and of his country. The influence of this institution on the intellectual, moral, and social condition of the people, is undoubtedly very great. This will be admitted on all hands, whatever diversity of opinion may prevail respecting the nature of that influence. Notwithstanding the rapid increase of dissent, (including Methodism) the Church of England is probably still possessed of as many grounds of real stability and permanence, as ever belonged at any one time to any national establishment of religion. There can be no question, indeed, that our own hierarchy, as well as those of other countries, has in former ages been supported by a far more general *acquiescence* and *submission* of the people, than it can boast of in the present day. But this never was, nor could be, any ground of enduring stability; being altogether the effect of blind prejudice and servile custom. The establishment is yet supported, we apprehend, by the rational conviction and preference, by the honest and earnest attachment, of vast numbers of our countrymen; amongst whom must be reckoned a great majority of those, whose intelligence, wealth, character, and station, will be likely to ensure them, for a long time to come, directly or indirectly, the largest share of power in ordaining measures of public policy. And besides these powerful *moral* supports, the Establishment has a wonderful source of strength in its close and complicated connection with the property, with the pecuniary interest, of individuals, of families, and of numerous corporate bodies, great and small, learned and secular. It is true, perhaps, that the maintenance of these interests is very consistent with some extensive changes in the constitution, doctrine, and disci-

pline of the Church ; but it is not consistent with the entire destruction of the Establishment, and the appropriation of its revenues to other purposes. Consequently, these interests, being so enormous as they are, and so widely diffused among the wealthy and influential of the land, will long present a most formidable obstacle to the adoption of any measures for the total abolition of the national Church. Therefore we say, that the Church still has many strong grounds, both of a moral and of a worldly nature, on which to build its hopes of protracted stability. So plainly is this the case, that we know of some enlightened and sincere Dissenters, who contend that the complete overthrow of our ecclesiastical Establishment is a work too visionary, and even too doubtful in regard to all its effects, to be made at present the object of any rational man's pursuit. On this point, however, it is proper that every one should exercise his own judgment, and be guided by his own conscientious convictions. Undoubtedly, in the pursuit of every good end prudence and expediency are to be consulted ; but principle is never to be compromised, whatever difficulties and discouragements may stand in our way.

Whether the destined endurance of our national Church be long or short, few persons can fail to perceive that it is now actually arrived, or is fast approaching, to a very critical period of its history. Such is the existing state of parties within the Church itself, such are the external circumstances, religious and political, to which it is exposed, that some important practical results must shortly ensue. The cry of Reform has been loudly raised within her own pale, by her own members ; the example of Reform, in however slight a degree, has been set by those who have the immediate power to order her affairs as they please. These steps must quickly lead to others. Not the enemies of the Church alone, but some of her most devoted champions, have said "that changes are necessary, and changes will be made." What is likely to be the character and extent of these changes ? Will they be of such a partial and inefficient nature, as only to excite a demand for still greater changes within a short space of time, and to prepare the way for the total and sudden downfall of the Establishment in some future political crisis ? Or will they be of such a bold and extensive nature, as to im-



part new vigour and durability to the Church; to renew her strength as the eagle's; to enable her to run a more glorious race than she has hitherto done, as the minister of true knowledge, sound morality, and pure religion, to the growing population of our towns and villages? These are secrets hidden in the darkness of futurity, and time alone can reveal them.

We shall satisfy ourselves, in this article, with attempting a brief sketch of the actual state of parties within the communion of the Church itself, in reference to this subject.

As we have already intimated, then, we cannot doubt that there is a most influential party in the country, who are sincerely and warmly attached to the Establishment, from a deliberate conviction of its great utility. They regard it as a necessary means of imparting moral instruction, and the various benefits of religion, to the people at large. This party, being in the main rational and disinterested in their support of the Church, have a true desire to effect such Reforms in the distribution of her revenues, in her ecclesiastical discipline, and probably, in her Articles and Liturgical service, as they feel to be real improvements in accordance with the spirit of the age. In this class, we believe, may be reckoned all the most enlightened and best portion of the Clergy. In the same class also, we would fain hope, may be reckoned the most liberal and patriotic individuals amongst the aristocracy and gentry of the land, as well as great numbers in the middle orders of society. And lastly, we may perhaps safely consider the King's Ministers, those who now hold the reins of Government, as being almost unanimously possessed of the same views. They appear to be firmly resolved to uphold the Church Establishment, but to have no blind and bigoted attachment to its existing corruptions. If this party should continue to prevail, as they do at present, in the councils of the country, and if they should be sufficiently prompt and bold in the measures they adopt, it is not impossible that the Church may be made to take fresh root in the affections and habits of the people.

There is another party within the pale of the Church, however, whose views and motives are evidently of a different kind. The ties which bind them to the Establishment

are altogether of a worldly and sordid nature; or at the best, are compounded of selfish interest and vulgar prejudice. They have been brought up to regard the Church as a most sacred and venerable institution; and they have found it to be a source of easy emolument to themselves and their connections. Either as ecclesiastics, or as lay patrons of benefices, they have a direct *property* in the Church, to which they cling as naturally and fondly as they do to any of their other estates. They have experienced what a comfortable provision the clerical profession affords for younger sons and poor relations. They see what a number of golden prizes it holds out to ambitious aspirants. They exclaim therefore against all designs of reducing or interfering with the Church revenues, as absolute robbery and spoliation. They are hostile to all attempts in any way to alter the existing condition of the Church; fearing lest they should be made to suffer the loss of their emoluments and advantages arising out of that condition. They fight against all plans of ecclesiastical Reform, in a spirit which nothing but personal and selfish views can inspire. If this party should prevail, so that no improvements, or none but the most trifling, should be made in the state of the Church, the establishment is probably destined, at no very distant period, to be suddenly swept away as an enormous and intolerable abuse. All hope of long upholding the Church in her present condition is madness: they who cherish any such hopes, will prove in the end to have been her very worst foes.

There is again another party in the Church, of comparatively recent origin, usually styled, and we believe, styling themselves, the *evangelical* party. If it were our vocation to point out, to the best friends of the Church, the real sources of her danger, we should be inclined to direct their attention particularly to the character and proceedings of this class of persons. They profess to be the authors of a revival of religion amongst the members of the national Establishment; but we fear it is, for the most part, though not entirely, a revival of that which is corrupt and pernicious, and which it would have been better to have allowed to slumber in the neglect and oblivion to which, as far as the Church of England was concerned, it had been consigned for many generations. The zeal and

fervour of this party might, perhaps, be of some service to the Establishment. But their ultra exhibitions of fanatical and gloomy doctrines, can in no degree tend to render the Church more acceptable to the people of England at large; and least of all, we should suppose, to the hereditary members of the Establishment, who have been so long accustomed to more sober and rational views. The pharisaical and puritanical notions of this party, besides being essentially erroneous, are as unsuitable as can well be to the peculiar character and wants of the present age. Their enthusiasm, however honest it may be in most cases, is of the weakest, the most puerile description, that has been manifested in this country for centuries. It is in fact Methodism, and of the lowest kind, only that it is within the ostensible pale of the Church. If this party should prevail, so as to model the discipline and ministrations of the Church according to their wishes, the consequence must be that there will arise a complete schism within the Establishment: or else, that serious Churchmen of the old school will be obliged entirely to desert her communion, that they may enjoy a profession and worship more congenial to their tastes; either of which occurrences would be the severest blow the Church has ever received. But though the evangelical party is apparently increasing its numbers, chiefly among the most unoccupied and excitable classes of society, we have yet perceived no signs of its winning over the better instructed and more reflecting among the laity, or the more intelligent and influential portion of the Clergy. On the contrary, Churchmen of this latter description seem to be growing daily more and more alive to the difficulties in which the increase of the evangelical sect may involve the Establishment.

In the last place, there is a very numerous class of persons belonging to the established Church, whom we know not how better to describe, than as the *indifferent* party. Nothing can be less indicative of a man's real religious opinions, or of the part which he would be likely to act in reference to any ecclesiastical changes, than the simple fact of his being an outwardly conforming member of the national Establishment. The Church includes all whom the influence of authority, custom, interest, or any idle cause whatever, induces to attend upon the weekly prayers of their parish. And it were preposterous for any

man to doubt, that in this way the Church embraces in her ostensible communion tens of thousands, perhaps millions of people, who will care as little what alterations the Parliament, or the Heads of the Church, may think proper to make in her doctrines and discipline, as they care for the changes which may take place in the dress of his Majesty's body guards. To them the Church would still be the Church, whatever alterations of this kind were to be effected. And, perhaps, having no prejudices on the subject opposed to Reform, they would, from the plain dictates of common sense, only be the better satisfied with the Church, if the Athanasian Creed were banished from her Liturgy, and all ecclesiastical livings reduced to a comparatively equal value. There would be no rebellion from them ; so long, at least, as no attempts were made to delude them grossly, in respect to the true origin and purpose of these changes. This appears to us a source of error with many persons, in judging of the present condition of the Church. They look only at the *numbers*, who professedly belong to her communion and avow themselves zealous for her prosperity. But it requires no very extensive intercourse with society, to enable any one to perceive, that a vast proportion of this crowd of adherents are attached to the Church, merely *because she is the national Establishment*, and not from any personal conviction of the Scriptural character of her existing creeds and confessions. It is dissent, or sectarianism, which they dread, much more than heresy. Let it once be decreed, *by the proper authorities*, that Reformation is desirable, and they will still continue as zealous Churchmen as ever.

For ourselves, we have little doubt that, before long, the combination of the last with the first of the parties we have here attempted to describe, will prevail over all others, both within and without the pale of the Church, and lead to such reformatations as may give the Establishment a sort of renewed existence. At present we deliver no opinion, whether this is likely to be more beneficial for the country than the complete and immediate abolition of the national Church. On this point, and on some others connected with the general subject, we shall take an early opportunity of laying some further remarks before our readers.

## THE CHRISTIAN TRIUMPHANT IN ADVERSITY.

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While wrecks of death around him spread,  
Portentous signs of Nature's doom ;  
The Christian walks with fearless tread,  
Amidst the deep and wasting gloom.

Though trembling tears may dim his eyes,  
What calmness rests upon his brow !  
Though clad his heart in sorrow's guise,  
No hopeless griefs his spirit bow.

A beam within his bosom glows—  
A faith which spurns at earthly fears ;  
It shines the brighter through his woes,  
As each frail comfort disappears.

The risen Jesus points his view  
To realms of peace, unknown to pain ;  
His eager steps the road pursue,  
And earth assails his soul in vain.

Though dreary wastes before him lie,  
And deep'ning clouds impend above ;  
Faith clears the distance to his eye,  
And opens Heaven to his love.

Then, Earth, where is thy power to harm !  
Thy glooms and storms undreaded fall :  
Nor thou, stern Death ! can'st raise alarm !  
The Christian spirit conquers all !

HUGH HUTTON.

*Birmingham:*



## ON FALSE AND TRUE DEVOTION.

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(Continued from Page 125.)

The ardours of a devotional temperament form no sure test or guarantee of corresponding practical virtue ; but on the contrary, the eagle has often soared to the sun, on a wing deeply stained with the dust and slime of the world. Many of those whose prayers and praises have flowed forth with an eloquence, and energy, and a power which seemed to mark them down for the spontaneous utterance of the soul, speaking her native language and rising to her native clime, have yet mournfully evinced, by the practical aberrations of their conduct, that such a temperament is not incompatible with great laxity of religious principle and infirmity of Christian purpose. The possession of such a temperament, therefore, must not be considered as indicative of any peculiar effluence of the spirit, or distinctive mark of the favour, of God. It is rendered valuable or otherwise, by the qualities with which it enters into combination. Combining with a loose and vacillating character, it is capable, as we have seen, of the grossest and vilest perversion. Entering into the composition of a character, firm in principle, and steady in resolve, it not only confers upon it a grace and a glory all its own, but supplies an eternal stimulus to all that is honourable and holy. Of itself, it is *nothing*, and derives its sole value from the respective moral qualities, with which it is associated. They who have possessed it, have often done evil ; and they who have wanted it, have often done well. None should, therefore, give way to religious despondency, because they suspect or believe that their devotions are offered up with less ardour than those of others ; and that they feel comparatively little of that which compelled the Psalmist to exclaim, in the impassioned poetry of the soul, “ As the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God ! ”

There are few qualities of our nature, whether good or evil, that are not common, to a certain extent, to all the race of Adam. Devotional feelings, in a greater or less degree, are a part of the common inheritance of humanity.

Few are so entirely "of the earth and earthy," as to have no capacity of recognizing and reverencing a Being of infinite power, intelligence, and love. The capacity is often dormant, but never extinct: it exists even in natures where it is least suspected of existing; the spark still lingers and lives under its load of dust and ashes—and, when cleansed from its incumbrances, and supplied with its fuel, it may be kindled into a vigorous and lasting flame. The habit of devotion is more deficient than the power; and men are content to transfer to nature the blame which, in the eye of reason, recoils upon themselves. The devotional feelings, like all the other feelings of our nature, are capable of being improved, if we are desirous in earnest to improve them. There may, indeed, be limits to their capability of improvement, beyond which, in the present state, it is not permitted us to advance; but those limits, on the other hand, are indefinite and unknown; and when, like the Macedonian, we have reached the boundaries of possibility, it will be time enough to lament, that we cannot go beyond them. The steady and efficient wish to improve the devotional faculties will not indeed create, but will elicit the power; and the high resolve, supported by the constant endeavour, will in this case, as in all others, ensure its own reward. Water may be found in the heart of the desert, by him who does not stint himself in the depth of his well; and the feelings of religion may be called forth out of its faith and practice, by those who are prepared to develope them by exercise and reflection. They cannot be obtained upon other and easier terms; but he who seeks them upon *these* terms, will not be wholly unrewarded. His devotional susceptibilities will be warmed and ripened by cultivation; and, if he cannot wholly remedy the deficiencies of his nature, what he gains will yet be more purely *his own*, a nobler acquisition for himself, and a more acceptable offering for his God.

In reality, the true fervour of piety differs not more, on the one hand, from indifference, than it does on the other, from those extravagant and unchristian rhapsodies, with which it is the practice of many degraded sects to rush before their Maker, and, in their own peculiar language, to *wrestle* with their God. They seem to imagine that the throne of the Hearer of Prayer is a citadel which can only be taken by storm; that, in the literal sense of the words,

‘the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent are to take it by force.’ But the fervour of real piety has nothing in it that resembles this gross and grovelling enthusiasm. The purest fire is always that, which emits the least smoke, and deposits the fewest ashes. Genuine piety, in its most elevated moods of excitement, is a more sedate, reflective, and self-collected feeling. While the soul of the sweet singer of Israel ‘panted for its God, even as the hart panteth for the water-brooks,’ there are yet no traces, in his thoughts or expressions, of the indecent and extravagant familiarity, with which so many engage in the acts of religious worship, and expostulate with their Maker, as they never would expostulate with their fellow-creatures. A piety less turbulent, and properly speaking less *profane*—an enthusiasm, more composed, more reverential, and more abiding—should be the desire of the Christian’s heart, and the object of his aims. Such a piety alone can be scriptural, practical, and enduring. Sunshine does not differ more essentially from lightning, than such a spirit of devotion from the dark and frantic extravagancy which is often offered and regarded as the noblest worship of the soul. The Most High has enabled his creatures to come before him with offerings more worthy of his nature; and to increase in equal degrees the power and the desire of making them, should be an object of no secondary rank in the aims and efforts of the believer.

To do this, let him, in the first place, remember his Creator in the days of his happiness. Let “his meditations of Him be sweet, and let him be glad in the Lord.” Let him habitually ascribe all he has and enjoys to the love and providence of his ‘Father in heaven.’ Let him repay with thanksgivings the benefactions of his Maker; and think of ‘every good and perfect gift, as coming down from Him who is the Father of all.’

Let him, in the next place, endeavour in his darker hours, to delight his soul with the comforts of his God; and amid the multitude of his thoughts within him, to dwell upon the recollection of all that he has done, and of all that he has promised. Let him strive to endure to the end, as one who hopes to ‘be saved.’ Let him lean upon Him, who has promised that He “will never leave nor forsake his faithful servants.” Let him endeavour, without repining or reserve, to resign his own will to the

will of his gracious God ; and pray for strength and faith, in the midst of his afflictions, to believe that all will issue well.

He who acts thus, in happiness and in sorrow—whom no happiness can tempt to forget, and no sorrow to despair—will find, that the habit of devotion will increase its fervour, and that his piety will warm in its heavenward flight, as the arrow takes fire in its passage through the sky. It is in this pursuit, as it is in every other :—practice produces facility ; exercise leads to improvement ; and other circumstances being equal, he, who prays the most frequently, will pray the most devoutly. Increasing faith will be accompanied by increasing fervour ; and the devotional susceptibilities will be more developed and excited, by every repeated attempt to develope and excite them. Every being who possesses a rational soul, may teach that soul to glorify her God.

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## GOSPEL ADVOCACY.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

### LETTER IV.

THE foundation of the Christian's hope, is the unity and paternity of God ; these all-important doctrines are enforced in every page of the Gospel, and are essential particulars of the good news therein conveyed to us, as hath already been noticed in two former letters.

A particular, not to be overlooked in speaking of the Gospel, as "good news," is, that it was conveyed to men by one duly commissioned for the purpose. What pleasing intelligence soever it might include, still, unless we could be assured that the person imparting it were authorised to do so ; unless we could be certain that the declarations of the love of God for us, of the acceptableness of repentance and the works thereof, and of the glory and immortality promised to those who persevere in well-doing, were founded in truth, we could not distinguish such particulars by the emphatic phrase "good news." The chief things communicated to us in the Gospel, are of a kind not to be discovered by natural means, but only by revelation ; it is therefore of essential importance that the divine authority of the Founder of our faith should be established by credible testimony.

Now this testimony hath been given in various ways. The united and reiterated evidence of the Evangelists, and of the writers of the Acts and Epistles, is, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—that is, that he is the Messiah of prophecy, raised up in order to bring men to God, by teaching them to abandon dead works and unprofitable ceremonies, and to worship him in spirit and in truth, and to serve him by living righteously, charitably, and piously. The truth of Christ's mission, and the certainty of the good news conveyed to us through him, are established by the internal evidence of the Gospels and Epistles, and by the reasonableness of the things therein propounded: they are shown in the originality, and yet the naturalness, of the character of Christ; in the consistency of this character at all times, and in all circumstances; in the piety and benevolence displayed in it; in the unimpeachable morality of it; and in the grandeur of the views and sublimity of the objects connected with it; they are established by the works and words of the messenger, which were such as no man could perform or utter, unless God were with him; and by the testimony of the men who were eye-witnesses of the Messiah's glory, and who sealed their testimony with their blood.

How truly doth the Gospel answer to its name herein! How welcome the news, that hath imparted a knowledge hidden from all previous time, breaking the silence which did for ages and generations prevent all acquaintance with man's future destiny! Christ not only taught the doctrine of a future life, but he was himself an exemplification of the truth of the doctrine which he taught. It was required in order to the accomplishment of the divine purposes, that Christ should die: had he not been "crucified and slain," in attestation of his truthfulness, we could not have been assured of a future life by actual demonstration; for none since hath been given. The resurrection of Christ sheds a ray of glory upon the dark region of death and futurity, and enables us to penetrate some of the mysteries of these states. The destroyer has no longer the inviolable dominion that he formerly had, for there is one who has escaped from his grasp and defied his power, and who has declared that all mankind shall hear the voice of their deliverer, and come forth to a righteous judgment and retribution of their deeds.



The faithful Christian, relying on the good news which hath been imparted to him, may, therefore, adopt the sentiments of the Apostle ; and rejoice in hope, that although flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption, yet, as we have borne the image of the earthly, we also shall bear the image of the heavenly, and the mortal put on immortality, and death be swallowed up in victory. If these things be so, how important it is, that every one should examine the sacred records of them for himself, and having ascertained what they require us to believe and to do, to abide therein steadfastly to the end. C.

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ON THE PERFECTION OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER  
AS A TEST OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

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God is a being of supreme excellence and glory. If we attempt to describe him, we feel our incompetency for the task. If we aim to rise in idea to the immense height of his perfections, our soarings are in vain. We form some ideas, however, fair though faint, of his exalted nature ; and we describe, according to the extent of our powers, his adorable and infinite graces. Although we can neither truly imagine nor describe what infinite perfection is, yet we are persuaded that it inheres in God. We know not of any dignity of nature which we do not ascribe to him, nor of any variety or modification of goodness which does not appear to us to be a component part of his moral character. We speak of his benevolence, his grace, his faithfulness, his forbearance, compassion and mercy, in the highest possible terms, and should describe them in language more replete with force, vigour and sublimity, were not language, like our own faculties, too weak and languid for the purpose.

The abstract opinions of all professing Christians on this grand topic are consentaneous with the views just stated. No one presumes to detach a particle of excellence from his estimate of the divine character. No one asserts that the slightest shade obscures the glory of the Eternal. Is there the same unity—the same consistency, in the representations of the divine character and government which are blended with the various forms and mys-

teries of Christianity? Let us inquire. Is it never said, that the plans of the Creator were essentially changed, through the weakness of a creature whom "a breath can make and a breath destroy," and his beneficence controlled by the obstacles such a being placed in his way? Does no zealous polemic, in his eager support of his own notions, virtually accuse the Deity of partiality? Are there no favorite dogmas which fix the character of implacability upon him? Is Christianity never preached in a form which makes God the agent to destroy the authority of his own emphatic declarations? which renders his truth suspicious? which impeaches his justice? which robs him of his darling attribute—Mercy? We contend that such inconsistencies do prevail in the Christian world; that the representations made by controversialists of what they are pleased to denominate the peculiar and most striking features of the Christian system, do not harmonize with their abstract ideas of the divine Being; and that there are dogmas, too favorite and popular by far! which detract from the unrivalled excellence of that Being, and cause him to approach in weakness to the standard of the fallible creatures who were formed by his hand. The consequences affecting the character of God, which may be deduced from some of the mysteries prevailing in the Christian world, are tremendous. According to one or other of them, He vacillates in his plans, he declares the immutable principle of his laws without adhering to it in government, he is neither uniformly just nor uniformly merciful, but establishes a partial and arbitrary distinction among his moral subjects, now dispensing his blessings according to a system of favoritism, and now withholding them even to the final reprobation of some who anxiously seek them.

Surely we are not speaking too harshly in calling such things inconsistencies! We feel them to be such, and would gladly witness their departure from among us. They are spots upon the disk of the sun, or rather, the envious cloud which partially conceals his face when the world pants for his brightest radiance. The divine Being cannot be too deeply venerated. It is impossible to plant in the minds of his human offspring, thoughts of his immaculate nature too correct or extensive for the theme of them,—the purest and holiest and sublimest ideas must fall

infinitely short of the reality: but even where these are cherished there is no redundancy of devotional feelings, nor is the regard for God and the sense of his presence too sacred. Every notion which is inconsistent with the glorious attributes assigned by nature and revelation to the Great Author of the universe, every description of his plans which does not leave his honour, justice and veracity, unsullied by a spot, every statement of his proceedings which may be construed into an attack upon his essential benevolence, must lower him in the estimation of those who approve without examination, and weaken the finest and purest tone of pious feeling. It is scarcely necessary to say that this is an evil, and an evil of magnitude. The silent language of Creation is, that God is perfect: it works upon the sensibilities of man, and calls him to devotion by waking within him thoughts of joy and gladness, of admiration, gratitude and love. The revealed dispensations of Heaven are to the same end, to preserve religion for the use and solace of mankind, to exalt the character of God in their view, and to win them to him by declaring him to be all that they can desire, and reverence and honour. If low and unworthy notions mingle with our ideas of this sacred Being, they must inevitably obliterate the lessons impressed upon the mind both by nature and revelation. They must diminish the ardour of our piety and the warmth of our zeal in his service, carry on a continual war against convictions of a moral, rational and satisfactory nature, and close upon us the most fruitful sources of devout confidence and joy.

We may place the subject in a different position, by stating, what few will deny, that a divine religion must be consistent with His character from whom it emanates. If he be a weak and partial Being, his weakness and partiality will be manifest in the communications made by him. If no imperfection attach to him, none can be visible in those revealings of himself and his designs with which he honors his intelligent creatures. We ask, then, what is the character appropriated to himself, in his intercourse with mankind, by the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob—by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? What sentiments concerning his excellence were expressed by his honored messengers and prophets—what, by the last the greatest and the best? We must give an answer in the

inspired words of the sacred volume, or our answer will be poor and trite. But read them—fix the eye on every page—take into one comprehensive whole, the eloquent, the varied, the repeated descriptions of Jehovah, and they shall fill the mind even to overflowing with exalted conceptions of Him. They form together a living picture of universal, infinite excellence and glory. His designs partake of the same excellence—they are imbued with the grand simplicity and moral beauty of his character. We see in the dispensation to the Israelites, benevolence consulting the interests and the happiness of mankind, in the mission of our Lord, the rich and the beautiful and full developement of that benevolence. We observe a provision made for the moral regeneration of mankind, for supplying them with intellectual, spiritual happiness, for attracting them to the highest purposes of their being, and bearing them in successive generations from this school of their virtues, to a land where virtue and holiness shall bloom in perennial loveliness, whilst He whose every attribute is grand and lovely, is hastening the mighty consummation.

But how is the fine gold made dim, when this enrapturing prospect is shut out from us by the veil of gloomy theology! The delight of such divine contemplations is put to flight at once when the sound of cruel and irreversible decrees and other dark mysteries reach the ear, and the soul mourns over its disappointment, repelled as it seems to be from the throne of divine grace and love. But their want of resemblance to the moral nature of God and to the avowed principles of his government, should excite a suspicion of their soundness and value; and whenever the conviction is felt that they are not reconcileable with these, they should be rejected for ever, that the mind may be permitted to retain its reverence for the benign Author of revelation, and draw from the Scriptures that exposition of his ways in the redemption and salvation of man which will consecrate to Him its purest affections and noblest hopes. Those views of the subject alone can be just and scriptural in which the unity of the character of God is preserved, and the supremacy of his excellence maintained; all others must be false in themselves, unjust to God, and injurious to men, because they excite doubt and suspicion, diminish confidence, and rob the soul of some of the purest delights of religion.

We would say more on the falsity and evil tendency of these views, and on the obstacles they present to the triumph of pure religion—but in the words of another. And we are happy in the opportunity of expressing our sentiments in the language of a veteran preacher of the Gospel—Dr. Adam Clarke. These are his words—“After having now laboured with a clear conscience for the space of fifty years in preaching the salvation of God through Christ, to thousands of souls, I can say, *that* is the most successful kind of preaching which exhibits and upholds in the clearest and strongest light, the divine perfection and mercy of the infinitely compassionate and holy God to fallen men;—which represents him to man’s otherwise hopeless case, as compassionate as well as just—as slow to anger as well as quick to mark iniquity :—tell then, your hearers, not only that the conscience must be sprinkled, but that it was God himself who provided a lamb! All false religions invariably endow the infinite Being with attributes unfavourable to the present condition of men, and with feelings inimical to their future felicity, and in opposition to their present good : such descriptions and attributes can never win man’s confidence, and as far as they are used and carried into the Christian ministry are a broad libel upon the Almighty.”

W.

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MODERN PRETENSIONS TO SUPERNATURAL GIFTS.

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(*Concluded from Page 132*).

It is not improbable that some of the readers of the *Gospel Advocate* may be of opinion, that the notice already taken of this subject in the last number, was more than it was entitled to, and that the whole business was such a display of fanatical folly and delusion, as altogether to be undeserving the attention of enlightened persons. Perhaps, however, on further reflection, they may be led to regard the matter in rather a different light. Let it be held to be all fanatical folly and delusion, as there is certainly very good reason to think that it is. But let us ask, how large a portion of the history of mankind, even its most striking and momentous passages, is but the narrative of the operation and effects of these very princi-



ples. What is ecclesiastical history, as a whole, but a history of the reciprocal proceedings of religious craft and religious credulity. Some brighter spots are doubtless to be excepted, but this is assuredly its general character. But it is not in Church affairs alone that the agency of these principles may be traced; with what wars, intrigues, and enterprises, and persecutions, have they not filled the whole field of human affairs! To despise the operations of fanaticism, is therefore impossible for a philosophical student of history. It is an agent of most extensive and mighty influence, and though the objects of its belief are but dreams, the principle itself is a great reality.

But a Christian believer has an interest in tracing the working of religious delusions, beyond what can be felt by the mere philosophical enquirer. He that rejects with sweeping disbelief all human pretensions to supernatural powers, or influences, in every age, is of course unconcerned with the criterions by which we are to distinguish the true from the false. But the case is very different with him whose most solemn hopes and fears are suspended on a belief of the reality of the supernatural manifestations attending the publication of the Gospel. It is precisely on the point of discrimination between true and false miracles, that Christian faith hinges. Of the mighty mass of supernatural circumstances that have been currently reported among men, and obtained more or less credit, we admit that the far greater proportion has been groundless fable. But if there remains a portion which we would redeem from this general sentence, it behoves us to be well versed in the reasons of this exception, which we think it is so important to make. If otherwise, we shall neither be really strong in the faith in our own minds, nor prepared to defend it effectively against assailants. It is when carefully contrasted with false pretensions, that the claims of those which are genuine become most conspicuous and convincing; as the distinguishing peculiarities of the true coin are best observed, when it is placed in immediate juxta-position with the base. So he who accustoms his mind to examine and detect the plausible display of false spiritual gifts, is in the way to attain to the clearest discernment of those which are real. It is he, and only he, who will really know *why* he rejects the enthusiast, the fanatic and the impostor, but embraces the

Messiah, the Prophets, and the Apostles. In this way it is, and not by condemning unheard and unexamined, every pretension to supernatural powers in our own day, that we shall build ourselves up in a true, enlightened Christian faith, and deserve the name of rational Christians.

Enough has already been extracted from Mr. Baxter's narrative, to give the reader a pretty fair idea of the leading features of that religious delusion, by which he now acknowledges that himself and his associates were led astray. We have seen him staggered and distressed, but not undeceived, by most palpable failures in the accomplishment of the supposed predictions and directions. More instances of the same kind, as well as some curious coincidences of an opposite nature, and such as greatly strengthened his belief, might now be given, did not our limits forbid. It will be proper, however, to notice the occasion of the great change in his views, which led him, rather suddenly, to abandon the whole enterprize, and unhesitatingly impute to the arch-deceiver that work which he had so lately rejoiced and gloried in, as proceeding from God. The principal cause of this change in our author's sentiments, appears to have been neither more nor less, than the detection of what he considered an heretical pravity, in the doctrine of Mr. Irving's church. It is well known, that this great modern apostle, (or *angel*, as we believe he has lately styled himself,) was sometime since summarily dealt with by the orthodox synods of the North, for maintaining a notion which was expressed in the terms of the "*sinful humanity*" of Christ. This burlesque dogma seems to have been not more impious and blasphemous, in the judgment of the assembled kirk, than it was sweet, consolatory, and precious, in the esteem of the "*Spiritual Church*," of which Mr. Irving was the angel. The one party could by no means tolerate it, any more than the other could think of recanting, or giving it up. Hence not only a schism, but an excommunication. Irving protested and argued, prayed and prophesied in vain. The ancient spirit of John Knox had been roused: the thunders of anathema muttered the decree of the Synod, and the erring member of Presbytery was amputated, and cast out.

Irving, however, was still Cæsar to the little flock that had crossed the Rubicon with him :—

From amidst them forth he passed ;  
And with retorted scorn his back he turned  
On those proud towers, to swift destruction doomed.

So at least he thought ; for *within three years and a half* they had settled that Babylon would be overthrown.

Mr. Baxter, however, was more deeply scandalized ; not at the sentence of the Scottish kirk, for that he lightly regarded ; but at the fatal lapse from sound doctrine into which he perceived that his leader had been betrayed. It was reported to him ; but not being able to believe it, he wrote himself to Mr. I. for information. Alas ! it was all true. Our author still regarded the manifestations as supernatural, but finding that they did not bear, as he thought, a nominal application of the test of confessing "*Christ come in the flesh,*" he came rapidly to the conclusion that the whole work was of the devil.

That those who hold an essential depravity or corruption of human nature, should be embarrassed in respect of the human nature of Christ, is nothing wonderful. The Catholic or orthodox Church holds, from reverence, that Christ was, in his human nature, free from all original sin and corruption, and therefore unlike all other men since the fall of Adam ; but Mr Irving was more moved with the consideration, that if Christ's nature had not been like our own, though preserved from actual sin, he would have been no fitting mediator for us. There is certainly much to be said on both sides of this question, supposing the assumption, out of which it arises, to be conceded. But to those who believe that the nature of man remains what God originally made it, of a mixed and imperfect character, indeed, susceptible both of good and evil, but never, in any proper sense, corrupt and depraved, except by actual sin and vicious habits, the whole controversy is precluded, and appears but as beating the air. Such believers are not driven to the dilemma, of either regarding Christ as corrupt in nature, or else as essentially differing in nature from his brethren whom he came to save. They can feel no difficulty in believing that he was naturally

pure and good, and yet that "he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The doctrine of human depravity, makes these two propositions absolutely irreconcilable, and therefore gives a natural occasion to strife and schism to those who hold it.

So it proved in Mr. Irving's church, occasioning no less a scandal than the secession of an *Apostle*: though, we believe, we have omitted to mention that Mr. Baxter had been advanced to this dignity. With this sad fact we must close the narrative.

The question will now naturally arise, whether in this whole affair, there has really been any genuine evidence of a supernatural interposition, or in other words, of a direct and immediate agency of spiritual beings. Let us very briefly consider the sorts of miracle which they pretend to. That on which they have evidently most relied, is some unusual inward impression or emotion, which they have regarded as revelation, and some extraordinary impulses to speak, or utter religious rebukes, predictions, &c. which they have called *utterances*. It cannot be denied, we think, that some at least of the parties, have really experienced something of this kind very peculiar and impressive, and such as they have, in full sincerity, believed to be a supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit. Still we must contend that what they have so regarded, has in reality been no more than an illustration of the natural history of "enthusiasm," a display of the kind of excitement to which many temperaments are liable in similar circumstances. It is to be observed, that the extraordinary emotions alluded to did not arise till a lively and eager expectation of a reception of spiritual gifts had been previously formed, and cherished with great confidence. This prepared the way. It led the parties to regard as supernatural what was in reality nothing very extraordinary, whether in the way of inward impressions, outward speech, or curious coincidence; but when this second step had once been attained—when they not only expected that miraculous gifts would be given, but were persuaded that they actually were so already, and that in their own persons; when they fancied that they saw the new age of spiritual manifestations actually begun, believing at the same time that in the short space of three years and a half, it was destined to issue in the second advent of Christ, and the establishment of his kingdom in

all its unimagined glories; is it wonderful that such minds should have been highly excited? But when to this we add that most exciting of all excitements, the idea of being themselves the great actors in this grand catastrophe; the chosen vessels of the divine spirit; the suffering, persecuted, heralds of Christ, (but only for three years and a half,) and then, yes then, (who would not have patience?) his vindicated and honored servants, exalted to the divine dignities and offices of his splendid *earthly* kingdom: we say, this is not only enough to produce high excitement, but to turn a man mad. No one can judge, *a priori*, either in the case of himself or others, what effect views and circumstances so extraordinary will have upon him. Experience alone can inform us; and experience testifies, that excitements to the full as extraordinary as these, have been produced by fanatical delusion on many former occasions. Even the ordinary *revivals*, as they are called, among the Wesleyan Methodists, in some remote districts, fall not far short of them. In fine, we cannot admit that mere violence either of impression and devotion, or of gesture and utterance, can ever be regarded as a legitimate evidence of a divine influence: it is a thing almost necessarily *equivocal* as to its supernatural character, and altogether too liable to be engendered by mere excitement, or stimulated by fraud.

As to their pretended manifestations of a prophetic spirit, we have seen little else than a series of egregious failures, ill-redeemed by a few happy coincidences such as mere accident will naturally produce occasionally, as it sometimes does the verification of a dream. Any man may be a prophet, if it is sufficient to prove true once in a hundred guesses—

“A fool must now and then be right, by chance.”

The pretended gift of tongues has, from the beginning, been a most ridiculous, as well as impious mimicry, of that truly astonishing and unexceptionable miracle of primitive Christianity. One might have thought it so evident, that the entire force and value of this sign lay in the circumstance of its being evident that a real language had been uttered, by one who as evidently could by no natural means have been acquainted with it, that no one, not even such credulous parties as the present, could



have attached any weight to it where this was wanting. In this case, however, there was scarcely ever a pretension to any thing of the kind. Mr. Baxter alludes to this subject in the following terms:—

“ My persuasion concerning the unknown tongue, as it is called, (in which I myself was very little exercised) is, that it is *no language whatever*, but a mere collection of words and sentences; and in the lengthened discourses, is much of it a jargon of sounds; though I can conceive, when the power is very great, that it will assume much of the form of a connected oration. One day in the Scotch Church, when I was meditating as to the propriety of yielding my tongue, and was in prayer for teaching on it, an utterance broke from Miss E. C.—‘ Yield your tongues to Jesus.’ The instances of such obvious discernment of thoughts are so numerous, as to take away the possibility of their being accidental coincidences. In almost all the persons with whom I have conversed, who were brought into a belief of the power, instances of obvious discernment of their thoughts, or references to their particular state of mind, have been so striking, as to conduce to their recognition of the power. This is a very mysterious dispensation; but as a spirit of divination, when any put themselves unfaithfully under the influence of the power, it certainly is able, and does make manifest the thoughts of their hearts, imitating the manner in which we may suppose the spirit of the prophets in the Corinthian Church laid open the thoughts of the unbeliever, as referred to by the Apostle. Indeed, the whole work is a mimicry of the gifts of the Spirit:—it is Satan, as an angel of light, imitating, as far as permitted, the Holy Spirit of God.”

That our author, after abandoning the enterprize and his associates, should still continue so firmly convinced of a supernatural agency, is certainly remarkable. We can only say, that none of the particulars which he relates appear to afford any legitimate and conclusive reason for so doing. But unquestionably, supposing it really evident that a supernatural power has been exerted, we must agree with him in deeming that it ought to be ascribed to some other spirit than that of God.

The whole narrative appears to us to afford a striking proof of the importance of what is often ignorantly decried: the use of reason in matters of religion. Here is fairly an

example of the manifold dangers and evils of an implicit faith. It carries men they know not whither: it breaks up all the habits of wisdom and prudence, which years and experience may have taught them; it puts an end to all modesty, order and decorum: it begets all manner of arrogance and censoriousness, unhallowed zeal and strife. We see that it never can be right, to let any miraculous pretensions be a ground with us for abandoning either what is reasonable in sentiment, or morally right in conduct: and that for this plain reason, that whenever the pretended miracle would prompt us to violate our understandings or our consciences, we ought to conclude either that it is no miracle at all, a groundless delusion, or that if it be indeed a miracle, it is the work not of God, but of some power of darkness. B.

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### THE LATE RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY.

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IN the present number we have to discharge a most unexpected and melancholy duty, in noticing the death of the Rajah Rammohun Roy. This truly good and great man, who has been justly styled "the apostle of truth and love" to his benighted countrymen, the Hindoos, expired on Friday, the 27th of September, at Stapleton Grove, near Bristol, the seat of Miss Castles.

We shall endeavour to lay before our readers as complete a view, as our brief limits will admit, of the principal circumstances in the life of the late Rajah, so far as they have been made known to the world. In drawing up this sketch, we shall not hesitate to make a free use of such accounts as have been already published; contenting ourselves with a simple reference, at the foot of the page, to our chief sources of information.

Rammohun Roy, then, was by birth a Hindoo of the Brahminical *caste*,—that is belonging to the highest of those distinct orders into which that people have been divided from time immemorial. None but persons of this caste are permitted to sustain the office of priests among the Hindoos, but all who are of the Brahminical order are not necessarily priests. The paternal ancestors of the late

Rajah had devoted themselves, for several generations, to worldly pursuits; chiefly, it appears, as civil officers or courtiers in the service of the Mogul Princes of the country. But his maternal progenitors, he informs us, "being of the sacerdotal order, by profession, as well as by birth, had uniformly adhered to a life of religious observances and devotion." The name of his father was Ram Hant Roy: he resided on his own landed property, in the district of Bordouan.\* Here the Rajah himself was born, but in what year does not seem to be precisely known; certainly not later than 1780, and perhaps several years earlier; so that he must have been at least fifty-three years of age at the time of his death, and was probably nearer sixty. Before he left his home, he not only received the best native education proper to his respectable rank in life, but was also instructed in the knowledge of the Persian language. He was then sent to Patna, where he studied the Arabic language, the philosophy of Aristotle, and Mathematics. Subsequently, he went to Calcutta, where he was instructed in Sanscrit, the sacred language of the Hindoos, in which all their ancient religious books are composed, and which is the peculiar study of the Brahminical priesthood.

The naturally acute mind of Rammohun Roy seems to have been impressed, at a very early period of his life, with the folly and grossness of the idolatry to which his countrymen are addicted. We are told that at the age of 14 or 15, he was in the habit of importuning his father for some reasonable explanation of these absurdities. He found no satisfaction in this quarter, however, and probably no encouragement to indulge in his unusual doubts and inquiries. In order to gratify his curiosity in these respects, he determined to witness some other forms of religion. For that purpose, he left his home, and passed two or three years in Thibet, amongst the infatuated worshippers of the Grand Lama, whose foolish doctrine he of course rejected and opposed. He was treated with great kindness by the people with whom he resided there; especially by the females of the family, whose generous

\* See Mr. Sandford Arnot's interesting paper, in the "*Athenæum*," of October 5th;—also a very full account, (we presume from the pen of Dr. Carpenter,) in the *Bristol Gazette* of October 3rd;—likewise "*Monthly Repository*" for 1819. Page 561.

and friendly behaviour left a deep and lasting impression on his mind, favourable to their sex. After this, he returned home, and was received with great affection and consideration by his friends, employing himself for some time in the further study of the Hindoo sacred writings.

The father of Rammohun Roy had, before his death, (which occurred about 1804,) divided his property among his three sons. The other two sons, however, appear not to have long survived their parent; by which circumstance Rammohun Roy came into possession of all the family property, which is represented as being very considerable. From this period, he grew bold in his high convictions and purposes, and resolved to devote his time, his talents, and his wealth, to the benevolent enterprise of reforming the religious opinions and practices of the Hindoos. He removed from Bordouan to Moorshedabad, where he published a work entitled, "Against the Idolatry of all Religions." This publication drew upon him the opposition and enmity of many persons. He soon afterwards removed again to Calcutta, where he purchased a handsome residence, and spent much of his time in the society of all the most intelligent and respectable, both of his own countrymen, and of Europeans. He now made himself master of the English language; studied Latin and the Mathematics; and made still more profound researches into the ancient philosophy and sacred literature of his country.

The religious books of the Hindoos are very voluminous, and their antiquity is exceedingly great. They are denominated the *Veds*. There is a sort of compendium of these books, however, which is called the *Vedant*, or the *Resolution of all the Veds*; it is thought to have been compiled about 2000 years ago, and is universally held to be of the highest authority. This work Rammohun Roy translated from the Sanscrit, the written language of the priests, into the common Hindoo and Bengalee languages; and subsequently published an Abridgement of it in the English language. His avowed object, in these publications, was "to awaken his countrymen, the Hindoos, from their dream of error, and by making them acquainted with their scriptures, to enable them to contemplate, with true devotion, the unity and omnipresence of nature's God." He followed up this line of conduct by

afterwards translating and publishing, in the same manner certain chapters of the *Veds*; those which in his opinion “fully established the unity and sole omnipotence of the Supreme Being, and that He alone is the object of worship.” It should be borne in mind that this was a conviction in the mind of Rammohun Roy, for which he uniformly contended,—that the present idolatry and superstition of the Hindoos, is a gross corruption of their ancient religion, the pure Theism contained in their sacred books. Whether he was entirely right in this conviction, we feel ourselves quite incompetent to decide; but it was evidently a sincere conviction, which greatly influenced and animated him in all his conduct.

It must not be supposed, that this true Reformer confined his exertions to such learned and speculative labours as we have hitherto noticed. He took a warm interest, and an active part, in whatever had a practical relation to the improvement of his countrymen. He established, and assisted others in establishing, native schools for the instruction of the poor Hindoos. He wrote several able tracts against the superstitious and inhuman practice of burning widows. It is generally allowed that his writings and exertions were of the greatest service, in promoting the abolition of that horrible custom. He likewise wrote much, both before and subsequent to his arrival in England, on subjects relating to the laws of Inheritance, to Courts of Justice, and to the imposition and collection of Taxes in India.

It appears to have been about the year 1817, after his settlement at Calcutta, that the attention of Rammohun Roy was first seriously directed to the Christian religion. He was soon perplexed by the varieties and inconsistencies of opinion prevailing among the professors of the Gospel, and especially by the unreasonableness of the Trinity and the Atonement. With his characteristic promptitude and vigour of mind, he immediately resolved to betake himself at once to the fountain-head of knowledge, by studying the original Jewish and Christian Scriptures. With this view he applied himself to learn the Hebrew language, under the instructions of a Jewish Rabbi, and Greek, the language of the New Testament, with the assistance of some of the Missionaries and Christian divines in Calcutta. Thus qualified for the task, he pursued his investigations



concerning the true doctrine of Moses, of the Prophets, and of Christ. The result was, that he was filled with the highest admiration of the wisdom and purity of the teaching he met with in our Scriptures; but at the same time was fully convinced that the tenets of modern orthodoxy are not to be found there.

Having acquired this persuasion, and being animated with an earnest desire to enlighten the minds of his superstitious countrymen, he compiled and published in English, Sanscrit, and Bengalee, "*The Precepts of Jesus.*"—This work, as most of our readers are probably aware, is simply an abstract of the *moral* discourses and precepts of Christ, separated as much as possible from every thing of a doctrinal or miraculous nature. This method he adopted, as he afterwards stated in explanation, from a conviction that such a simple exhibition of the moral excellence of Christianity, was more likely, at first, to make a favourable impression on the minds of the Hindoos, than any statement of abstruse doctrines which they would be liable to misunderstand, or the relation of miracles which they would be apt to confound with their own religious fables. But, as might have been anticipated, this mode of presenting Christianity to the attention of the natives gave deep offence to the Trinitarian Clergy, and Missionaries, in India. "*The precepts of Jesus,*" which had been published anonymously, was bitterly attacked in various quarters, particularly in a periodical entitled "*The Friend of India.*" The illustrious author replied to these strictures, (though still anonymously) in a work entitled "*An Appeal to the Christian Public, in defence of the Precepts of Jesus.*" At length a new combatant appeared on this field of controversy, in the person of the learned and pious Dr. Marshman, head of the Baptist Missionary College in India. This was the occasion for calling forth the extraordinary qualities and attainments of Rammohun Roy, in a more glorious light than ever. In reply to Dr. Marshman, he soon published a second "*Appeal to the Christian Public,*" in which he vindicated his Unitarian sentiments, not on the ground of reason alone, but on the ground of Scripture likewise, with a degree of learning, acuteness, and power of argument, that filled the minds of all impartial observers with wonder and admiration. The Baptist Divine issued another attack, to which the

Hindoo Reformer published an answer, under the name of the "Final Appeal." In this work, he displays the same vigour and perspicuity of reasoning, the same undisturbed gentleness of disposition and urbanity of manner, as in his former publications.

It was about this period, that an intercourse, so remarkable in its ultimate effects, took place between Rammohun Roy and the Rev. William Adam of Calcutta. This latter gentleman had been sent to India as a Baptist Missionary. He became the friend and instructor of Rammohun Roy; and the consequence of their intercourse was, that the Trinitarian Divine was convinced of the correctness of the views of Christianity entertained by the Hindoo Reformer. Mr. Adam became a zealous Unitarian, and, together with others of the same persuasion, opened a chapel in Calcutta for the sole worship of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." To this undertaking Rammohun Roy was a warm friend and liberal supporter. Indeed, at this period, according to the testimony of one who knew him well, both in India and in England, "the whole powers of his mind were directed to the vindication of the doctrine of the unity of God. He propagated it day and night, by word and writing, with the zeal of an apostle, and the self-devotion of a martyr."

Rammohun Roy's visit to England had been in contemplation by him for many years. In a letter to a friend in this country, written as early as 1817 or 1816, we find him expressing his intentions on the subject in the following words:—"If you do not return to India before October next, you will most probably receive a letter from me, informing you of the exact time of my departure for England, and of the name of the vessel in which I shall embark." This visit, however, was delayed by various circumstances, for 14 or 15 years; chiefly, we apprehend, by the law proceedings instituted in India to deprive him of *caste*, and consequently of property, on account of his alleged departure from the religion of his ancestors. But these attempts were, in the main, unsuccessful; and at length the calls of public duty appeared to unite with his own personal wishes, to hasten the execution of his long-cherished design. The time for the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company was at hand; and he naturally wished to be present in this country, during the settlement

of affairs in which he felt so deeply interested. It is understood, likewise, that he was entrusted with an important commission from the King of Delhi, respecting the settlement of some pecuniary transactions between his Majesty and the English Company. It was on this occasion, and from the King of Delhi, that he received the title of Rajah. He arrived in England, and disembarked at Liverpool, on the 8th of April, 1831. Since his arrival, his time had been chiefly spent in London; in forwarding the public business with which he was charged; in observing whatever is most worthy of notice in the arts, sciences, manufactures, and public institutions of this country; and in receiving the incessant attention of visitors of all ranks and parties. He had an early introduction to the King, and was present among the Ambassadors, at the scene of the Coronation. His chief residence was with the family of Mr. Hare, of Bedford-square, London, the brother of a gentleman with whom he had long been on terms of intimate friendship in India. By the members of this family he appears to have been treated with the most generous and uniform kindness.

Rammohun Roy never connected himself with any party, religious or political, in a spirit or manner at all exclusive. He was the furthest possible removed from a sectarian. In religion, he appeared desirous to observe and judge of the worship and proceedings of all respectable denominations. But most certainly, the Unitarians of this country have no reasonable ground for the least astonishment or complaint respecting his treatment of them. He, soon after his arrival, and frequently at subsequent periods, visited all their principal places of worship in the Metropolis. He was present, and publicly declared his sympathy with them in their general views and purposes, at one or more of their anniversary meetings. And we are persuaded that, living and dying, he never did or said any thing inconsistent with that most solemn approbation, and most enlightened defence, of Unitarian views of Christianity, exhibited in his written works.

The health of Rammohun Roy was evidently in a very infirm state when he reached England, and had been so at intervals ever since. It is said, however, to have been much improved during 1832. At the close of that year he paid a short visit to Paris, since which, in the opinion of one

who was often with him, "both body and mind seemed losing their tone and vigour." He had long promised to come into the West of England; and it was his intention, if he had lived, to spend the approaching winter in Devonshire. He reached Bristol in the beginning of September, and on the 17th was confined to his bed from indisposition. On the 19th he was seen by Mr. Estlin, an eminent Surgeon of that place, who from the first thought seriously of his disorder. He was visited also by Dr. Prichard and Dr. Carrick; and received every possible attention from the family at Stapleton, from Mr. Hare and his niece who came from London, from his son and his Hindoo servants. But the attack, (which was one of fever, affecting the head,) proved insurmountable by human skill and care. Paralysis and spasms came on during the 26th, and he fell into a state of stupor from which he never revived. He expired at twenty-five minutes after two on Friday morning, the 27th of September. "He told his son and those around him that he should not recover. He conversed very little during his illness, but was often engaged in prayer."

His body was privately interred in the grounds belonging to Stapleton Grove, but without any of the usual rites of Christian burial. This proceeding, we apprehend, was adopted from prudential views, in order to guard against the probable loss of *caste* and property to his descendants.

We now feel tempted to venture a few observations, (and they shall be but few,) on the character and opinions of this very extraordinary man. In respect to the *intellectual* qualities by which he was distinguished, there can surely be but one estimate formed by all competent and impartial judges. The vigour, compass, and activity of his mind, as well as the extent of his endowments, were manifested in all that he thought and wrote; and, we believe, were peculiarly displayed in his conversation. His whole history, viewed from beginning to end, is a striking exhibition of true greatness of mind. The very circumstances of his having, almost from the first dawn of reason in his soul, perceived the folly of the superstitions and idolatries to which all around him were addicted,—and yet that he never fell into the Atheistical scepticism, which is said to be not uncommon among the more acute and reflecting members of his order—these circumstances indicate a degree of strength and soundness of intellect,

which cannot be viewed without feelings of the highest admiration. There is another evidence of the same kind, in his noble determination to make himself acquainted with the true doctrines of Christianity, not by listening to the representations of contending sects, but by the study of the original Scriptures; and in his prompt acquisition of the Hebrew and Greek languages with a view to this end. These are the acts of a mind conscious of the strength, and accustomed to the exercise, of its own rational powers. And in all his published works the same qualities are conspicuous. We every where trace the signs of his vast industry in the acquirement of knowledge; of the quickness and reach of his faculties of observation; of the earnestness and singleness of mind with which he devoted himself to the pursuit of truth on every important subject of inquiry. In particular, there is to be observed in his writings a very remarkable clearness, closeness, and pertinency of argument. His method of reasoning is always, in the best sense of the word, logical. This may have been partly the effect of his early training in mathematical and philosophical studies; but we are disposed to ascribe it rather to the native energy and lucidness of his mind.

Great, however, as were the intellectual endowments of Rammohun Roy, we doubt if even these were not surpassed in excellence by the *moral* qualities of his character. We distinctly remember, that this was a conviction which came irresistably upon our own minds, when we enjoyed an opportunity, though but for a brief period, of gazing upon his glorious features, watching his manners, and listening to his speech. We knew, before, that he was intelligent and wise: we were then persuaded of his goodness. There was a mingling of light and love in the very beams of his countenance. Gentleness and sensibility, meekness and benevolence, were observable in his views of all subjects, and his treatment of all persons. His devotional feelings, as far as man may judge of the heart of man, were deep and fervent. His zeal for the cause of human improvement and happiness was equally ardent and enlightened. But most of all, perhaps, he was influenced by sincere compassion for the degraded moral and social condition of his own countrymen, and by the purest desires to see that condition ameliorated. This, we



are inclined to believe, was the reigning wish of his soul,—the prevailing principle of all his conduct. His character comes up to our best ideas of a true patriot. Privileged and enlightened as he was in himself, he never forgot those who were “his kindred according to the flesh,” to whom he was bound by the ties of a common blood and common country; and he would at any time gladly have sacrificed his life, as perhaps he has done, to promote their deliverance and welfare.

Concerning the opinions of this great Reformer, on all the most important subjects of human knowledge and belief, it is unnecessary for us to say much, after what has already been stated in this brief sketch of his history. We will but just remark that, in our humble judgment, the proper light in which he is to be contemplated, is not that of an avowed *convert* from heathenism to the Christian faith. We are not aware of any evidence, that he had ever professedly examined the question respecting the *supernatural* origin, the *miraculous* introduction and establishment, of Christianity. But certain it is, that his great mind and pure heart were thoroughly imbued with a strong conviction of the internal truth and excellence of genuine Christianity, both in doctrine and precept. He “had the spirit of Christ;” and in this sense, if in no other, may be safely pronounced to have been “one of His.”

“The consequence,” he says, “of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth, has been, that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and better adapted for the use of rational beings, than any others which have come to my knowledge.” Wise and good man! What effects his labours might have produced in India, if he had lived to return thither, with his enlarged experience, and under the improved system of government which we trust is now prepared for that country, is more than human judgment can determine. It has pleased the All-wise Disposer of events to call him hence. And we should be ashamed of our religion, if it did not permit us to cherish the belief, that when “many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven,” the benevolent Reformer of the Hindoos will be there.

## ON THE INTERMENT

OF THE

**RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY.**

## I.

Thy Nation sat in darkness ; for the night  
 Of pagan gloom was o'er it —Thou wast born  
 Midst superstition's ignorance forlorn :  
 Yet in thy breast there glow'd a heavenly light  
 Of purest truth and love ; and to thy sight  
 Appear'd the day-star of approaching morn.  
 What ardent zeal did then thy life adorn,  
 From deep degrading guilt to lead aright  
 Thy fallen people ; to direct their view  
 To that bless'd Sun of Righteousness, whence beams  
 Guidance to all that seek it—faithful—true ;  
 To call them to the Saviour's living streams.  
 The cities of the East have heard thy voice—  
 “ Nations behold your God ! rejoice—rejoice.”

## II.

Exil'd from home, e'en in thy earliest youth,  
 The healing balm of woman's love was pour'd  
 Into thy troubled breast : and thence were stor'd  
 Deep springs of gratitude and pitying ruth.—  
 To lead thy race to that primeval truth  
 Which, bright and pure, on all alike bestow'd,  
 Points heavenward ; and to guide them on the road  
 Of Christian faith—was thine : but yet to soothe  
 Neglected woman ; to assert her right  
 To drink of wells of everlasting life ;  
 To snatch her, trembling midst the dismal night  
 Of pagan horrors, from the fiery strife  
 Of dark-soul'd zealots—*this* must wake our love,  
 This fervent raise our thanks for thee above.

## III.

Far from thy native clime, a sea-girt land  
Sits thron'd among the nations ;—in the breasts  
Of all her sons immortal Freedom rests ;  
And of her patriots many a holy band  
Have sought to raise the world from the command  
Of that debasing Tyrant who detests  
The reign of truth and love. At their behests  
The slave is free ; and Superstition's hand  
Sinks powerless.—Hitherward thy steps were bent  
To seek free commune with each kindred soul,  
Whose highest powers are ever willing lent  
To free their race from folly's dark controul.  
To our blest Isle thou didst with transport come :  
Here hast thou found thy last, thy silent home.

## IV.

Thy work thou didst fulfil while yet 'twas day ;  
And still right-onward towards thy beacon tend  
With faith and zeal. And now thy footsteps bend  
Where Christian friendship offers thee the stay  
Of sympathy and love. But who shall say  
What joy was ours, the eager ear to lend  
To all thy accents, and thy steps attend ?—  
The Angel of the Lord hath call'd away  
His faithful servant, at the evening hour,  
While glowing tints still gild the western sky.  
Yet though around our hearts dark sorrows lour,  
And tears of sad regret must dim the eye,  
We mourn not without hope. Thy race is run,  
Enter thy rest !—Servant of God—' Well done' !

## V.

Bright hopes of immortality were given  
 To guide thy dubious footsteps, and to cheer  
 Thine earthly pilgrimage. How firm and clear  
 Arose thy faith, that as the Lord hath risen,  
 So all his followers shall meet in heaven !—  
 Thou art gone from us ; but thy memory, dear  
 To all that knew thee, fades not ; still we hear  
 And see thee yet as with us :—ne'er are riven  
 The bands of Christian love !—Thy mortal frame  
 With us is laid in holy silent rest :  
 Thy spirit is immortal ; and thy name  
 Shall by thy countrymen be ever blest.  
 E'en from thy tomb thy words with power shall rise,  
 Shall touch their hearts, and bear them to the skies.

## INTELLIGENCE.

## SOMERSET AND DORSET UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

At the meeting at Bridgwater, September 25, the religious services were conducted as usual. The Rev. S. Walker, of Crewkerne was the morning preacher ; the Rev. B. Aspland, of Bristol, delivered the discourse of the evening. A small number of friends dined together, and the afternoon was partly occupied with the interesting accounts given by Messrs. Walker and Jenkins, of their respective churches. The next meeting is fixed for Ilminster, on Good Friday, next year. Mr. James, of Bridgwater, has undertaken to preach on the occasion.

## TO SUBSCRIBERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

*Examiner on the Athanasian Creed shall appear in our next. We have received the communications of R. (Tavistock,) of J. W. T. and of C. R. Thanks for the Dissertation on the Three Witnesses.*

THE  
GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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PRESENT CONDITION AND PROSPECTS OF THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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UNDER this head, we have already endeavoured to describe the principal parties existing at this time within the nominal communion of our Established Church. We have stated that there are :—1st. Those who are desirous of upholding the Establishment, from a full and serious conviction of its great usefulness, as a means of promoting true religion and sound morality in the nation : but who yet are neither blind to the necessity, nor opposed to the accomplishment, of such reforms as would put an end to some of the greatest abuses now connected with the Church, and render her, both in doctrine and discipline, more conformable to the improved opinions of the age. 2nd. Those who, having little other attachment to the Church than what arises from considerations of worldly advantage, are violently opposed to all changes ;—foreseeing, or fearing, that any change must be detrimental to their selfish interests. 3rd. The comparatively new party, styling themselves Evangelical Churchmen, who, whilst they are favourable to some salutary alterations in the distribution of ecclesiastical revenues, and the discharge of ecclesiastical functions, are at the same time zealous for imparting to the *teachings* of the Church, in substance and manner, a more highly Calvinistic or ultra-orthodox character. 4th. Those who, although from mere habit or fashion they outwardly conform to the Church, yet, having no decided personal opinions, and very little thought on the subject, may be regarded as almost totally indifferent about any reformation in the Establishment ; and these constitute, we strongly suspect, by far the most numerous class.

But in order to form a judgment of the entire condition and prospects of the National Church. . . . . right to



consider also the state of parties in the country, at the present day, *without the pale of the Establishment*. These parties are, perhaps, quite as manifold and heterogeneous as those *within* the communion of the Church.

There are, first, those whom we shall call (rather for the sake of distinction than on any other grounds) *proper Dissenters*. There is a large class of religious people—not confined to any one sect, but dispersed throughout all sects,—who are hostile to the Church of England, chiefly from a persuasion of the unlawfulness of all state Establishments of Christianity, of all such direct alliance between the kingdoms of this world and the spiritual kingdom of Christ. They profess to regard it as one of the essential, characteristic qualities, of this divine religion, that it is fitted and designed to stand alone, in its own heavenly strength, unsupported by the power, unconnected with the fallible authority, of the rulers of this world. With this distinguishing peculiarity of the religion of Christ, they deem all State Establishments of religion to be wholly irreconcilable; for such establishments, say they, take that form of Christianity, which they adopt, under their worldly patronage, endowing its Ministers with worldly riches, honours, dignity and power. These Dissenters believe that there are in Christianity some injunctions, or some principles, which make it absolutely wrong, under all circumstances, for earthly rulers to interfere with the regulation of christian churches, or with any of the spiritual concerns of a christian community. They hold, therefore, that it is as unlawful for the disciples of Jesus in any case to agree to such interference, as it is for temporal governments to practice it. This rigid principle of non-conformity, must oblige all who entertain it to wish for the complete demolition of the whole fabric of the Established Church; and that all the concerns of religious profession, worship, and teaching, should be left wholly to the zeal and piety of religious people. This is what their convictions must naturally lead them to desire, and by all just and lawful means to promote; and we believe there is a pretty general disposition amongst them, in this respect to act up to their convictions; though not without a serious and prudent regard to the manner in which the real interests of religion may be affected by their conduct. If they apprehend that circumstances afford no prospect of

their wishes being accomplished in the present age, they may still consistently rejoice in any changes which promise to make the Establishment more effectual for the promotion of its acknowledged purposes. But, of necessity, they would rejoice much more in seeing the nation awakened to a sense of the impropriety of continuing such an institution in the land.

The party, (if it may be called so), of which we have thus far spoken, consists of persons who are professedly and truly religious. Their objections to the Establishment, their wishes for its total downfall, whether well or ill founded, are at all events of a religious character. But it is evident to those who observe the signs of the times, that there is a considerable and an increasing party in the nation, who, without making any great professions of religion, in many instances perhaps without having much personal religion, yet agree with serious Dissenters in wishing to see the alliance between Church and State utterly destroyed. Their motives are political, or economical. They are friendly to the general progress of knowledge, and of reason, of freedom of enquiry, and liberty of thinking; and they look upon the existence of a national priesthood, and an established religion, as unfavourable to these improvements in the condition of mankind. They perceive that the Church is in various ways an enormous burden, a source of heavy taxation, to the country; as reformers and political economists, therefore, they desire the complete abolition of the Church. They think they have discovered that the prelates and clergy of a State Establishment, will always be inclined to favour the measures of corrupt and arbitrary rulers, as being entirely dependent on those rulers for professional advancement;—they wish, therefore, to be wholly rid of such an obstacle to the cause of free and good government. On such grounds as these, and from no religious principle or prejudice whatever, they would have the Church Establishment immediately put down, and religion placed on the same footing in this country as in the United States of America. This class of persons can have no feeling that should prevent them from proceeding straight forward to the attainment of their object, whenever the political circumstances of the times shall give them the necessary power;—and in this respect they would probably be joined

by some, though not by all, of the last mentioned party,—the rigid and pious Dissenters. There are not a few talented and stirring men, of the description we are at present speaking of, who have now seats and an influential voice in the Legislature. They have several times declared their views openly, and their party appears to be somewhat on the increase. Yet we can scarcely believe there is any likelihood of their succeeding in their designs. And, indeed, it is surely not to be desired, that measures of this kind should be determined by the political views of those, who, whatever may be their respectability as men of the world, have professedly no serious regard for the interests of religion, nor any belief in its truths. Let the question of a Church Establishment in general, or any question relating to its modification and improvement, be entertained partly as a question of temporal policy. It ought to be so entertained ; for such is its obvious and essential nature in many points of view. Still, let it not be treated as a mere political consideration,—not without some serious, honest, deliberate regard, to the true moral and religious welfare of the people. We will quarrel with no man for any sincere opinion he may adopt on this subject, after he has well viewed it, in its moral, as well as in its political and economical bearings. But we cannot admire the character of him, who would proceed at once to legislate on these matters, without the slightest attention to the moral wants and circumstances of millions of his fellow-subjects.

There is, again, a numerous class of persons in the country who, although they dissent from the Church at present, in faith and worship, yet their dissent is not founded on any conviction of the entire, essential unlawfulness, of a National Establishment. They would be well satisfied, to see the Church purified of her corruptions, and rendered a truly effective instrument for diffusing sound education, useful knowledge, true morality, and pure religion, throughout the multitudes of the land. Their complaint is, not that a Church exists, but that this Church is not what it should be. “It consecrates,” say they, “many false and antiquated doctrines, and upholds many superstitious customs ; but it does not foster the spirit of true and rational devotion. It retains too much of the errors of Popery. It tends to make both its Clergy and Laity

the slaves of a prescribed system of faith, and a ritual devotion ; but it gives no encouragement to the free exercise of mind, in the discovery and reception of religious truth. It is an admirable contrivance for upholding aristocratic power, for enriching the indolent and worthless, through the means of a selfish and indiscriminate patronage ; but it leaves religious integrity, it leaves ability, learning, and zeal, to pine in hopeless indigence ; and it gives the people very little real service, in return for the millions it takes annually from the national resources. Whilst it answers some bad ends, which are not, and cannot be, generally avowed by its supporters,—it is for its proper and ostensible purposes almost a complete failure. If it be not at once entirely abolished, therefore, it ought at least to be immediately reformed. Let its enormous revenues be more justly and beneficially distributed ; let the services performed in consideration of such payment, be more extensive, and more in accordance with the wants of the present age, than are the mummeries of consecration, and confirmation, and such like priestly ceremonies ; let the confessions of doctrine and modes of worship be rendered more enlightened, more liberal and comprehensive ; let the people, for whose spiritual benefit the Church is professedly established, be allowed a greater share of influence in all her affairs, especially in choosing the pastors by whom they are to be taught, consoled and guided ; let a greater spirit of benevolence and kindness to all classes be infused into her ministrations. In short, make the Establishment what a Christian Church ought to be,—a real blessing to the nation. Then, we are not prepared to say that there will be any inconsistency with the laws of Jesus Christ in permitting it to exist ; though we might still prefer retaining our freedom and our many advantages as Dissenters. But certainly, until these reforms are made, we shall not only continue to dissent for ourselves, but we shall use our liberty as Englishmen, as subjects of a free country, in crying aloud against such abuses as abound at present in our National Church, and in making every lawful effort for their speedy removal.” These, or something like these, we think, are the views of a very numerous portion of the community.

There is yet another class of men, another set of views and motives, to which the interests of the Establishment

are at present exposed. There are thousands, mostly within, but partly without, her nominal communion, who are filled with extreme disgust and dissatisfaction with the Church, solely on account of her various pecuniary exactions, the vexatious jurisdiction of her ecclesiastical courts, and the worldly-minded conduct of many of her Clergy. The persons to whom we now especially allude, either approve of the *religious* character of the Church, or are totally indifferent upon that subject. Their hostility is occasioned by the *temporal* burdens of the Establishment, and by the political and social demeanour of not a few of its ministers. The tithes, the oppressive and annoying tithes, have alone made a host of enemies to the Church. The agricultural population almost universally feel the grievance of this system; even where it is not, as however it often is, the cause of local quarrels and personal enmities. The heavy rates which are frequently imposed, for building and repairing Churches, are another fruitful source of discontent. The imprudent,—to give it no harsher name,—the imprudent demeanour of some of the Clergy, as politicians and aristocrats, has often served to render the very name of the Church odious to a whole neighbourhood. The truth should be spoken, and the truth is, that the ministers of the Establishment, high and low, have too generally shewn themselves opposed to measures of political and social reform. The people do not, and will not, easily forget this circumstance. From these causes there are great numbers who, whilst they still suffer themselves to be regularly tolled into Church on the Sabbath, hate and despise the Establishment regarded as a national Hierarchy. In any violent attempt that should be made to overthrow or to humble the Church, these persons would probably be found amongst her fiercest assailants; though it is not unlikely, that many of them would be the first to feel compunction for their conduct in this respect, when the storm was over and the wreck strewned at their feet.

Such, then, as far as we are able to judge of and to delineate them, are the present circumstances and prospects of the Church of England. What may be the result of such a peculiar state and conflict of parties, both within and without the pale of the Establishment, is more than any mortal can pretend to foresee. One thing



alone appears to us certain,—that matters cannot much longer remain as they are : some considerable change must soon be effected. The nature and extent of the change will very much depend on the political circumstances of the country. If, through the rashness of one party, or the obstinacy of another, there should be some great convulsion ; if a struggle take place between the people at large and the abettors of existing abuses ; it is not improbable that English Episcopacy may fall again, as she has fallen before, and be doomed for a period, or for ever, to lie prostrate in the dust. But should no such sudden commotion arise, should a liberal and enlightened Government be able to maintain its ground, and become gradually more liberal and enlightened, it is not impossible that the Church may be so far reformed, as to continue for ages the medium for communicating moral and religious instruction to a large portion of the country. For ourselves, we must avow that we entertain but one simple wish or principle on the subject ;—namely, that every thing should be done, which circumstances will allow to be peacefully done, for the intellectual, moral, and spiritual cultivation of the people. Though we account ourselves pretty staunch Dissenters, we cannot say we have any conviction that no possible interference of a national Government can take place, that no national Institution can exist, for the promotion of religion, without violating the laws or the spirit of Christianity. Provided such an Institution puts no shackles upon freedom of conscience, directly or indirectly ; provided it is really made conducive to the advancement of knowledge, virtue, and piety ; provided it has the hearty consent and approbation of the people at large ; then, we do not know what precept of Christ, or what principle of true religion, absolutely forbids its existence. On the other hand, we must confess we cannot bring our minds to entertain the least apprehension that, if the Established Church were abolished to-morrow, the cause of pure religion in this country would suffer any serious and extensive injury from the change. We are persuaded that so great is the necessity for religion, so widely is this necessity understood and felt, so mighty is the power and excellence of Christian faith, so deeply is it rooted in the minds of the people of England, rich and poor, wise and simple,—that there would be no permanent want of provision for admi-

nistering its holy truths and motives, though the Episcopal Establishment should even suddenly be numbered amongst the things that were. Therefore, whenever the general question, or any of its important modifications, shall come before the Legislature and the country, let all who take an interest in public affairs, look upon the subject at once with boldness and with calmness. Let no mere party views, or sectarian prejudices, be allowed to influence their minds. Let it be considered only what is right in principle, expedient in practice, and best adapted to promote the cause of truth and piety, of sound religious improvement, and of social prosperity and happiness, amongst all classes of people. It seems not improbable that, at no distant period, circumstances may press the subject earnestly on public attention. Every right-minded person must desire that whenever this shall take place, all discussions and proceedings relating to the Establishment may be conducted in a serious and impartial spirit. It were deeply to be regretted that a subject of so much importance should be made a mere question of rivalry between jealous and hostile parties, whether nominally within or without the pale of the Church. Let the interests of undefiled religion, and the true moral welfare of the country, be alone consulted in any measures for abolishing or reforming this venerable but not immaculate institution. He who cannot rise above the influences of a sectarian spirit, to view the subject in this broad and pure light, will do well to be careful how he ventures to take any part in the great and important work of CHURCH REFORM. Those who *are* conscious of being actuated by a sincere attachment to religion, and an earnest desire for their country's welfare, must be bold to encounter the obloquy and opposition that will certainly be offered, in no measured degree, to all Church Reformers. The cry of spoliation and impiety will be loudly raised against them. They will be denounced as ungodly enemies to all religion; for the majority of those who resort to the temples of the Establishment from mere custom, can seldom discriminate between their own Church and the Church of Christ. Let the friends of reformation, therefore, prepare for an arduous, but, as we trust, a successful and triumphant encounter with the blind or interested supporters of all things as they are.

## DESCENT OF ALL MANKIND FROM ADAM AND EVE.

INGENIOUS adversaries of the religion of the Bible, have often endeavoured to derive objections to some of its principal doctrines and narratives, from nature,—from the study of natural philosophy, or natural history. The Mosaic account of the creation of the world and of man, of the deluge, and of various other facts, has furnished a wide field for objections of this kind.

It is most gratifying, however, to the intelligent believer in revelation, to observe that these supposed inconsistencies between nature and the Bible, are gradually vanishing, with the progress of knowledge and of true philosophy. It cannot be affirmed, perhaps, that all obscurity is yet entirely cleared up. But it may be truly said to be the general tendency of modern discoveries in science, to shew that many objections of this sort, which were once thought to be very formidable, are either entirely groundless, or have been greatly exaggerated. There are many signs given, that the philosophers of the present day are not, in general, so much disposed to scepticism as were those of the last generation. Geologists, for instance, begin to recognise great truth in the Mosaic account of the comparatively recent origin of the human race, and of the existing state of the earth, though it may not be precisely that which had been commonly entertained for truth. The Deluge, also, is now so far from being a monstrous fable, that it is thought to be amply confirmed by natural evidence. This favourable change in men's views must be ascribed to the equal advancement of sound Biblical criticism and of sound Philosophy. May they still proceed on their glorious march, hand in hand, until the ways of God appear to all men, as they doubtless are in reality, one harmonious system of Wisdom and Goodness !

The subject on which we now lay a few extracts before the readers of the "GOSPEL ADVOCATE," is *the descent of the whole human race from one pair*. This has been thought to be very incredible, and indeed contradicted by many circumstances in nature ; especially by the great and marked distinctions which now prevail in the various tribes of mankind. On these grounds the human race has been classed into different groups,

or families, which are supposed to have had each a separate origin. But it seems that this opinion will not bear the test of examination, and that philosophers are becoming more inclined to adopt the doctrine, or tradition, of the Bible. In the volume lately published, under the title of, "Report of the First and Second Meetings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science," there is an interesting paper on this subject, by Dr. Prichard, of Bristol, already well known as the author of an elaborate work on the Physical History of Man. In the paper alluded to, Dr. Prichard gives a very able view of the comparative testimony of philology and of physical researches, on the subject of which he treats. His conclusion is decidedly against the hypothesis of separate origins of mankind, and in favour of the descent of all from one pair.

The following are his words :—

"It appears, on the whole, that the attempt to constitute particular families of nations, or to divide the human species into several distinct races, upon the principle of a permanent and constant transmission of physical characters, is altogether impracticable. In the first place, such divisions of races do not coincide with the divisions of languages. We shall find one class of men as distinguished by physical character, including several races entirely distinct from each other, when reference is made to their languages. Thus the Turkish or Tartar race are separated by their language from the Indo-European nations, and the distinction is not less when we go back to the earliest ages. How distant indeed must have been the period when the Cæltæ and the German nations, and the Greeks, Latins, and Slavonians were separated from the Hindoos! Yet all these nations have preserved from that period strong proofs of the identity of their speech!—Nor can we imagine why the Tartars alone should have lost all traces of their former language, if they had once partaken of the same idiom with the nations just mentioned, or had a dialect allied to it! The distinction of races, according to the same principle, will, besides, separate nations who are shown to be connected by their language, when they happen to have acquired a different character, diversities of figure or complexion.—I have already alluded to particular instances which exemplify this remark.

"Secondly. A second objection to the distributing of men into different races on the ground of physical diversities, is, that it is contradictory to the very principle which has been always professed by the most enlightened writers on the philosophy of natural history, and which, it may be added, had been admirably maintained and illustrated by Cuvier himself, in regard to the nature and distinction of species. The clear and broad line which he lays down as constituting the distinction of species in natural history, is that of permanent and constant difference. We are under the necessity of admitting the existence of certain

forms which have perpetuated themselves from the beginning of the world, without exceeding the limits first prescribed : all the individuals belonging to one of these forms constitute what is termed a species.' 'Varieties,' he adds, are the accidental subdivisions of species.' This is his own account of the laws constituting species. By himself the diversities found between different races of men are clearly laid down as *varieties*. To regard these afterwards as permanent, is to contradict what has previously been established. In fact, we must either concede at once that there are several distinct human species,—an hypothesis which would be immediately opposed by a number of insuperable objections,—or we must allow that no permanently distinct races as constituted by physical characters exist in the one human species.

"If these general observations are allowed to be well founded, they will lead towards the conclusion,—that the *various tribes of men are of one origin*. The diversities of language carry us, indeed, very far back towards the infancy of our race, and are perhaps much more ancient distinctions than the varieties of form and colour. But these diversities require no such explanation as that of a separate origin, or a distinct creation of the several races who are so characterized."

The moral influences of this conviction are all of a pleasing and beneficent character. It must strengthen the ties of brotherhood amongst all human beings, to think that they are thus *literally* brethren, as they are descendants of the same parents ;—that not only hath one God created them, and they have one Father in heaven, but the blood of one earthly progenitor flows in their veins, whatever be now their colour or their clime. Such a justification and encouragement for universal benevolence, is not to be despised by the moralist, who knows how difficult it is to elevate the minds of men to purely moral and spiritual considerations. Pride, tyranny, and selfishness, are always very ingenious in discovering any plausible excuse for the crimes to which they give rise. The history of British Colonial Slavery, and of the Slave Trade, will shew how comfortably many of the chief actors in those scenes of cruelty, could lay the flattering unction to their souls, that the objects of their tyrannical conduct were an *inferior race* of men. But if the conjoint testimony of revelation and of philosophy may be trusted, all men are of the *same race*, offspring of the same earthly parents. Let us devoutly hope that at no distant period they may all learn to recognise their fraternal relation to one another, and that eventually they may all constitute one happy family in the mansions of their Father's house !

Mr. Fox has touched on this subject, with his usual



felicity of thought and expression, in his splendid sermon on "Human Brotherhood."\*

*Man's Common Origin.* All are descended from the same parent—they had all one father on earth, and they have all one father in heaven. This is the assertion of the Mosaic history; and it is a rational inference from recorded facts and existing appearances. Opposing traditions have vanished, with other gloomy shadows, from the enlightened parts of the earth; and opposing philosophical theories are vanishing after them. Physiology has ceased to find specific differences in men; and traces, in the greatest diversities of form and colour, only individual varieties, which, occurring at an early period, have been perpetuated and spread by hereditary transmission. The laws of population lead us to one first-created pair, about the period assigned in Scripture history as an adequate solution of the existence of all earth's millions; and one, therefore, which we cannot reject without violating the received, and reasonably received, rules of philosophical speculation. This gives a literalness to the doctrine which has its worth to many minds. Our fraternal relation to mankind is not a practical figure, a pious fraud, a benevolent phrase—it is a literal historical fact. Divided and distinguished as we are, physically, by seas, mountains, climates, colour, modes of life; divided as we are, by education, opinions, prejudices, government, philosophy, religion, these divisions all narrow as we go back to a little undivided family, which then was the whole human race; into which ourselves, and those most remote, most dissimilar, most hostile, are alike resolvable; and that we were then so identified in fact, should now identify us in heart, and swallow up every little feeling in the sublimity of that philanthropic union.

The Christianscholar may not dislike to be reminded also of the observations of the elegant Lanctantius on this subject: †

Summum igitur inter se hominum vinculum est humanitas: quod qui diruperit, nefarius & parricida existimandus est. Nam si ab uno homine, quem Deus finxit, omnes orimur; certe consanguinei sumus; & ideo maximum scelus putandum est odisse hominem vel nocentem. Propterea Deus præcepit inimicitias per nos nunquam faciendas, semper esse tollendas; scilicet ut eos, qui sint nobis inimici, necessitudinis admonitos mitigemus. Item si ab uno Deo inspirati omnes, & animati sumus, quid aliud quam fratres sumus? Et quidem conjunctiores qui animis, quam qui corporibus. Itaque non errat Lucretius, cum dicit,

Denique, cælesti sumus omnes semine oriundi:

Omnibus ille idem pater est.

Ergo pro belluis immanibus sunt habendi, qui hominibus nocent, qui contra jus humanitatis & fas omne spoliant, cruciant, occidunt, exterminant. Ob hanc necessitudinem germanitatis docet nos Deus, malum nunquam facere, semper bonum. Id autem ipsum bene facere, quid sit, idem ipse prescribit: prestare auxilium depressis, & laborantibus; impertiri victum non habentibus.

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\* "Sermons on the Principles of Morality inculcated in the Holy Scriptures. By. W. J. Fox, 1833." Sermon vi.

† Lanctantii De vero cultu. Cap. 10.

## HYMN.

While He, on whom our hopes depend,  
 Triumphant leaves the tomb,  
 Oh ! let our souls from Earth ascend,  
 And shun the sinner's doom !

O'er earthly scenes the wasting blight  
 Of sin and death is cast ;  
 But Jesus leads our wond'ring sight  
 Where never sorrow pass'd.

Why should we then desire the toys,  
 Which shine—and perish here ?  
 Our hopes be fixed on Heavenly joys,  
 Which ne'er shall disappear !

Alive to Christ, but dead to sin,  
 Our hearts shall faint no more ;  
 A deathless power reigns within,  
 And endless is our store.

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## HYMN.

Hark ! our Father's voice inviting,  
 In the Gospel calls us home !  
 Age with youth their hopes uniting,  
 Let us at His bidding come.

Fellow-heirs of one salvation,  
 Let one spirit rule each breast ;  
 Jesus points our destination—  
 Him we follow to our rest.

## IS THE MOSAIC RITUAL A SYMBOL OF THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTION ?

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RESPECTING the affinity of the Law and the Gospel, it is obviously just to refer to the first authority of their respective founders, Moses and Christ. Moses, the man of God, said to the people of Israel, "Jehovah will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me : unto him ye shall hearken." After the days of Moses there ensued a venerable succession of prophets, divinely inspired ; yet not so as to fulfil the prediction, in either of them being like unto Moses. They were only morning stars that sang together ; sons of God, who shouted for joy, to announce, in distant perspective, the day-star of unrivalled majesty ; the Sun of universal, everlasting righteousness.

Neither of the prophets under the old dispensation was on a par with Moses in pre-eminence of dignity, as the head of the Jewish economy. The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. Moses alone came near the Lord. And He gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God. In the act of presenting the statutes of the Most High to his people, Moses officiated as mediator between God and man. He was the herald of communication from heaven. Appointed with full powers to preside in the council of the nation, as law-giver, judge, counsellor and leader, he faithfully and reverently acquitted himself of his exalted trust ; and through their long pilgrimage in the desert, conducted his charge to the borders of the promised land. Now, let us refer to the testimony of Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth. He expostulated with the Jews in these argumentative terms :—"Ye have an accuser, even Moses, on whom ye trust : since, had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote concerning me. But if ye believe not his writings, how will ye believe my words ?"

Jesus was like unto Moses, mighty in wisdom and in works, in meekness and forbearance,—in piety and devotion to the will of the Supreme, and diligence in doing good and finishing the work of the ministry, as long as

the day lasted. More especially, as the introducer of a new religious era, Christ may figuratively be said to have his prototype in Moses. But he is the dispensator of a more excellent service, the law of which hath been established on better promises. His administration was the medium of intercourse between God and man, as Moses was the Mediator between God and the Israelite nation. There is no greater mystery in the mediation of Jesus than in that of Moses. The law came by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Granting this similitude between the principal ministers of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, we may proceed to inquire whether any of the Mosaic rites was originally designed and expressly instituted to represent, beforehand, the future character of the Christian economy? For example, is it evidently proved that the sacrifice of the paschal lamb was directly or solely prefigurative of the death of Christ? Christ at the last passover adopted the expression of Moses concerning the "blood of the covenant," shed for the remission of sins. The law required from its votary an offering, as a proof of obedience, rather than as a service of advantage to the ever blessed Lawgiver. Will the Lord be pleased with countless hecatombs; or with rivers of oil? I will have mercy—not sacrifice. These were the pleasing views of prophets and sages in times long prior to the days of the Messiah. The dawn of his bright morning then appeared; the shadows of primeval darkness began to disperse by degrees; yet the whole horizon of heavenly truth was not disclosed into perfect daylight. Blood, as of a victim, may satiate the thirst of revenge: but if the oblation of the paschal lamb, in no instance, could of its own virtue cleanse a guilty conscience, or purchase forgiveness of sin, neither could the sacrifice of the Son of Man—which it pre-signified—avail to rescue from punishment the hard-hearted and impenitent. Theologians have bewildered themselves in the mist of allegory. In this maze of error the Jewish Rabbins, and the Christian Fathers indulged their vain imaginations—insomuch as to render the "commandments of God of none effect," by their traditions and false glosses.

The main stay of the tenet that the Christian economy was minutely and circumstantially represented in the Jewish ceremonies, seems to be derived from the Epistle to the Hebrews. While the Judaizing converts were strongly

tenacious of the Mosaic rites, the author of this Epistle, addressing them as Jews, borrows his illustrations from the constitution and style of the sanctuary, with a view to point out the infinite superiority of the new dispensation of the Messiah. It must be allowed that the analogy is striking even to a Gentile reader; and obviously much more so to the Jew, in proportion to his more familiar and devout acquaintance with the whole ceremonial of his national temple—its priesthood, its altar, its victims or sacrifices—its oblations and prayers, its pompous festivals, its sacred vail, and the holiest of holies. In this happy vein of comparative estimate, or analogical reasoning, he insists on the main tendency of his argument, viz. to reconcile the minds of the believing Hebrews to the very offensive doctrine of a crucified Messiah, by representing the death of Christ as that of a victim of a superior nature, whose blood was shed to ratify a covenant far superior to that of Moses, of which sacrifice those of the Levitical institute were nothing more than types and shadows, even as the dim and unsteady glimmering of the stars, reflected from the waving bosom of a tremulous lake, yields but faint, uncertain traces of the glory of the originals.

The Epistle opens with asserting the superiority of Jesus to all former prophets and messengers of God, and argues the superior regard due to the dispensation which he was commissioned to introduce. “God, who in many parts, and in many ways, spake formerly to our fathers by the prophets, in these last days hath spoken to us by his Son—with a view to whom he even constituted the former dispensations.” In many parts, *πολυμερως* i. e. partly by one prophet, partly by another; *πολυτροπως*, in different ways, by which the prophets communicated the revelations they received to the fathers: they did it in types and figures, &c., whereas the Gospel revelation was spoken by Christ and his Apostles in one manner only, namely in plain language. See Belsham’s note on the first verse of the Epistle. And thus it appears that God has all along acted equally for the good of mankind in matters of religion; though in different manners, according to their different circumstances and capacities; that his several dispensations have been gradually opened so as regularly to rise out of and improve upon each other;



and that the state of knowledge and perfection in the world has hitherto been perpetually increasing.

From these observations on the progressive course of religion, deriving tributary streams of increase as it flows through successive ages, it may justly be inferred that one dispensation of it was preparative of another. Lord Verulam observes,\* that while nature effects one end, Providence elicits from it another—for the leaves, which nature, agreeably to her custom, brings forth, are used by Providence to defend the tender fruit from the inclemency of the weather. Righteous men were trained up under the discipline of the law ; which, says the Apostle, served as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The Old Testament resembles a goodly tree in full blossom in the spring ; the New Testament the same tree loaded with all its mellow fruits in autumn. “ All Scripture given by the inspiration of God is profitable for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,” in the dispensation preceding the Gospel. The Scripture to which Paul alludes was that “ book of the covenant,” in which Timothy had been taught “ from a child.”†

The Jews in the time of our Saviour were probably as different from their countrymen in the period of the Judges, as we are from our ancestors of the Saxon heptarchy. They had long had among them most of those causes which tend to unfold the mental powers. A system of laws and polity, writers of the most distinguished excellence, commercial and political intercourse with other nations ; they had acute and subtle disputants, and an acquaintance with different sects of philosophy ; and under these circumstances, it is probable that most of those questions would be agitated, which at similar periods, have exercised and perplexed the human faculties. Our Saviour was the great Reformer, the innovator of his day ; and the strain of his energetic eloquence was strongly pointed against abuses of all kinds ; and precisely those points of duty were most insisted on, which he found most neglected. We shall meet with con-

\* *Dum natura aliud agit, providentia aliud elicit.* De. Augen. Scien. L. 3.

† See Michaelis's Introduction to N. T. Chapt. 1.

tinual disappointment if, in the few scattered discourses, most of them too, conversations, which are preserved to us of our Lord, we expect to find any thing like a regular code of laws, and still less a formulary of rules, like the minute directions of the Koran. Christ referred to known laws, and only endeavoured to restore the spirit of them, and to exalt the motive of obedience. The great duty of honouring our parents had probably not found a place in his instructions, but to expose the "tradition which had made it of none effect." He spake in parables, and in aphorisms of a comprehensive meaning, which came home to men's business and bosoms. These maxims being well impressed, the detail of conduct may be left to itself. By presenting to the mind one fixed consideration—such as this—"it is more blessed to give than to receive"—a corresponding temper is formed within us, so that our first impressions and impulses are sure almost of being on the side of virtue; and that we feel likewise an almost irresistible inclination to be governed by them. Such counsels and monitions sway the heart with the melting force of a father's farewell benediction. When this disposition is perfected, the influence of religion, as a moral institution, is sufficiently established. That the Jewish Theocracy was accommodated to the circumstances of the nation over which it was to exercise its authority, cannot be denied: neither is it doubtful whether it was the instrument of the supreme Governor to produce abundant harvests of truth, righteousness, and prosperity, during many ages. But Jehovah had foretold that from the rising to the going down of the sun, his name should be great among the Gentiles; and Jesus adopted the extraordinary and unparalleled design of fulfilling this divine prediction.

The old covenant was local and transitory. Never could it be presumed that with any pretext of equity and impartiality the oracle of God, and his promise of especial favour, should be for ever circumscribed within the borders of Judea. The God of the spirits of all flesh—who loveth all whom he hath made—would not refuse the knowledge of his benign and merciful dispensations to any of his offspring. It was preposterous to surmise that "He, who freely dispensed the influences of sun and stars to all alike, should cause the light of his heavenly truth to shine, as it were, but into one small closet of his spacious

“house; leaving all the rest, so many stately rooms, “encompassed with shades of ignorance and error; that “he should pour down the showers of his blessings spiritual “otherwise than those natural, upon one only scarcely “discernible spot of ground, letting all the world beside, “like a desert of sand, lie parched with drought, over- “spread with desolation and barrenness.” The Gospel commands its disciples to justify the wisdom of providence, —“let your light so shine before men of all nations that seeing your good works, they may glorify your Father, who is in heaven.” Thus the law of Christ, inscribed on the living tablet of the heart, transcends the limits of time and space, and becomes, like an attribute of the deity, universal and eternal. Isaiah is elegantly styled the Evangelic prophet, from his announcing the Gospel in a strain of precision and perspicuity, singularly indicative of its glad tidings. He predicts the nature and the extent of the new dispensation. It was to be administered to the whole race of mankind. “The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy vision.” And, says Malachi, in prospect of the worship in the reign of the Messiah— “in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering”—i. e., it shall not be the less acceptable for not being at the temple. Nothing can be more simple than the principle here enforced, or more agreeable to the rules of just interpretation than to suppose, that the language of the law, in the terms altar, sacrifice, &c. is employed to convey these prophetic intimations of the Gospel. The ancient fathers of the church very improvidently confirmed the use of these terms, when speaking of the Christian rites: for though they used them, and professed to use them, metaphorically, yet it gave countenance to strange extravagance of Scripture interpretation among the Romanists. The ingenious author of the “*Principes de la Foi Chretienne*,” Tom. I. p. 273. brings this prophesy of Malachi for a proof of the divine institution of the sacrifice of the mass.

Isaiah is still more explicit, and declares, in direct terms, that the dispensation should be changed: “Behold, I create New Heavens and a New Earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” This in the prophetic style, means a New Religion and a New Law; the metaphors being taken from hieroglyphical

expression. He that giveth his mind to the law of the Most High will seek out the secrets of grave sentences, and be conversant in dark parables. Parabolic writing corresponded with the genius of oriental learning: works of argument abound in traits of imagination, and in reasoning from analogy, which is hardly ever honoured with the name of proof. There is no presumptive evidence that the Hebrew legislator enacted any rite, or ceremony for the end of serving as a type to adumbrate the form of characters and observances, that would transpire in remote futurity. "Our Saviour and his apostles never describe this ritual, still less the minute peculiarities of it, as being divinely intended to shadow forth the characteristic doctrines of Christianity: and wide is the difference between the phraseology of the only inspired teachers of the Gospel, and the phraseology of many a writer and preacher, in succeeding ages. What christianity is we are to learn altogether and exclusively from the Christian scriptures; though we should read attentively the Jewish sacred writings, with a view of understanding the exact relation of the Law to the Gospel, and of becoming familiar with the style of speakers and writers, who, with scarcely an exception, were native Jews." In the *Christian Reformer*, of May, 1833,\* is inserted an admirable disquisition, entitled, *Judaism introductory and subservient to the Gospel*, and preceded by an apt quotation from the classical pen of Jortin; "The Gospel represents the law of ceremonies as a temporary institution." Dr. Geddes remarks—"I know not if it be too much to affirm that whether the works of Moses be considered as a compend of history, or a digest of laws, or as a system of theology, or as models of good writing, they are in some respects unequalled, in none over-matched, by the best productions of ancient times." They comprised the civil, political, and religious constitution of the Hebrew commonwealth; but were never designed by the great invisible Author, by whose spirit they were dictated, to be a mere scenic representa-

\* Had the writer of the present Essay seen, at an earlier period, that production from a master's hand, in the *Reformer*, it would have superseded this humble effort to draw attention to an interesting topic. He deprecates any comparison of his petty tribute to the grand reservoir of knowledge, with the brief but comprehensive expositions of that accomplished scholar; whose oblations on the altar of truth are—  
 "Εκ κρηνης ιερας ολιγοι σταγονες."

tion, pre-nunciative of the intellectual, moral, and ever-during government of the Messiah. Awful was the voice that issued from Mount Sinai,—but in the ear of reason not more venerable than the milder voice that spake from the hill of Olivet, in the desert and in the cities of Judea. Truly God was in that place. In the thunder, and in the lightning, and in the tempest, that terrified the armies of Israel, He was; but not more truly, not more really there, than in the man, Christ Jesus: from him the eternal wisdom flowed in the purest and most gracious emanations. To this “charming voice” may we still listen with filial reverence and obedience; whether we repair with Moses to the tabernacle with its ever-burning lamp, or with Christ to the temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

EVANDER.

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## THE RESTORED LEPER.

### A TALE.

*“And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, ‘I will, be thou clean.’” Luke v, 13.*

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THE widow of Benai dwelt in the city of David, with her son Achim. He was her only son, the light of her steps, and the support of her old age. Many were the riches which the widow of Benai possessed, for the Lord had blessed her flock with a great increase, and she had besides much silver and gold; but she held no treasure so great as her son Achim. Often would she repeat to him the blessed promises of a Saviour, who was to be born in their own city, in the city of David. But her ears were shut; she knew not that already the saying was fulfilled, and that the time of his ministry drew nigh. Now, Achim loved the words of his mother, and he longed greatly in his heart for the time when these mighty things should be accomplished. Often during the silent hours of the night did he leave his chamber and watch on the house top for the break of day, praying that the Saviour of the world might also appear in his glory. Often, when the first ray of light lit up the little hills with gladness, would he raise his voice in prayer to God in the words of David his father:



“Lord, hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.” “I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.” “My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

When the day advanced, Achim hastened to the Synagogue, for he was “glad to go into the house of his Lord.” As the evening drew on he came again to his mother, and at her feet conversed with her on the hope of Israel—the coming of the Saviour. But one day he returned at the sixth hour; his face was gladdened with joy, and he trembled like the bearer of good tidings. He sought his mother in the inner court, and found her reposing beneath the shade of the lofty palm trees. Now, there was a fountain near where she lay, and she beheld the shadow of her son in the water, and turning quickly she said, “My son, why art thou returned at this hour? is it well with thyself? is it well with our brethren?” And he answered her and said, “All is well.” Then again she entreated him to say why he had come thus quickly. And he said, “Mother, he of whom thou hast spoken to me, of whom our prophets spake, is come; the Saviour of the world is here.” The mother clasped her son in her arms, whilst together they knelt and praised God for his great mercy in letting them see his salvation.

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The day arose brightly, but sorrow was in the heart of Achim. He left the house and slowly departed for the dwelling of the high priest, the stately Melchi. And the priest looked upon him and said, “My son, may the Lord help thee; thou hast judged rightly, thou art a leper and utterly unclean.” Then he read from the Scriptures, from the 3rd book of Moses, “That the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, Unclean! All the days in which the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean, he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.” Very sad and despairing were the thoughts of Achim as he departed from the city. At the sound of his voice the people fled; yea, even his friends fled when he proclaimed

himself unclean. He went not to his home, but left the gates of the city sorrowing, for he knew that his mother would grieve sorely when she knew all that had befallen him. And he departed thence without taking leave of her. But can a mother forget her child? Can a parent bird forsake her little ones? The mother of Achim followed and said unto him, "Suffer me to be with thee my son; nay, I will not leave thee. Art thou not mine only son?" But he turned from her, and plunged into the wilderness, for the mandate had gone forth that he must dwell alone. Days passed on, and the foul disease left him not. His heart was sick with disappointment. When, behold! the hour of his deliverance drew nigh. He saw approaching a band of fishermen, with one in the midst of them whom they proclaimed as "the Teacher." The Teacher! how his soul rejoiced at the welcome name. He raised his languid body from the dust, went forth to meet his Master, and again throwing himself prostrate, entreated him saying, "Sir, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth his hand and touching him, said, "I will, be thou clean."

R.

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THE SCRIPTURE INTERPRETER.—No. V.

*Matthew, xviii. v. 20. xxviii. v. 20.*

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"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." These two passages afford Trinitarians a plausible argument for their doctrine of the proper and essential deity of Christ. The argument is founded on the supposition that, in these words, our Saviour expressly assumes the divine attribute of *omnipresence*—natural ubiquity, real and personal omnipresence. If this supposition be correct, we must admit that the argument is conclusive. No one but God can be *actually* present in all places at all times. Whosoever has promised that he will be so present, must either be the self-existing and everlasting Spirit, or he must be an impious deceiver;—there is no alternative. But after repeated and mature consideration of the subject, we see

abundant reason to reject the supposition that Christ had any such intention in these words.

There are three points, which every careful inquirer must feel himself bound to ascertain, before he ventures to infer so important a doctrine from these passages. 1st. To whom, in reference to what *persons*, was this solemn assurance of Jesus given? 2nd. To what *period of time* does the promise relate? 3rd. What is the *nature of the presence* spoken of by Christ? On all these points Trinitarians have their favourite assumptions; but their assumptions are, we conceive, on every point wrong. This trifling circumstance converts what would otherwise be sound argument into delusive sophistry.

The persons to whom Christ gave this assurance, that he would be with them, are understood by Trinitarians to be all his sincere disciples, assembled in his name, in all ages, and in all parts of the earth. But the context of both passages is very much at variance with this understanding of the words. Jesus was, on both occasions, speaking to his chosen disciples, his future Apostles, *they alone being with him at the time*. In the beginning of the eighteenth chapter, we read that “the *disciples* came unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And the whole contents of the chapter consist of such instructions as were evidently addressed to “the twelve” privately, and for their especial guidance. In the 18th verse our Lord says to them, “Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” Must not every candid reader acknowledge that this relates, *exclusively*, to the peculiar authority and proceedings of the chosen Apostles? So again, in the 19th verse. “I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven.” Surely this also relates to the solemn deliberations and proceedings of the *Apostles*, and to them alone. Sober-minded believers in these latter times are not accustomed to appropriate this special promise to themselves. Why, then, should the 20th verse be thought to require any wider application of its meaning? “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Surely, this means that whenever two or three of the Apostles should

meet to deliberate and resolve on those matters, peculiar to their divine mission, referred to in the former verses, Jesus would be with them. The context of the other passage is, if possible, still more decisive in favour of a similar interpretation. Christ is there also addressing his apostles in *private*, they alone being present. It was after his resurrection, when he met them in a mountain in Galilee, and gave them their final commission. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations——and lo, I am with you always." With *whom*? Surely, with these very men, to whom he had just given such especial power and authority, and in such a manner as to assist them in the execution of their divine office. This promise Jesus might and did fulfil, without being endowed with omnipresence, or even with the capacity of being, personally, in more than one place at the same time. But what right has any modern reader, to take such an extraordinary promise out of its context, and apply it to all christian believers in all ages? If this be allowable, why not take the same liberty with the other promises, so closely connected with this? Why not say of every company of believers, that "whatsoever *they* shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever *they* shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven?"

If this limited application of our Saviour's promise in respect to the *persons* for whom it was intended, appears thus probable from the context, it is also consistent with the *period* spoken of in the latter of the two passages. It is allowed by all Biblical scholars, that the words of Scripture do not necessarily, do not properly, mean, "*the end of the world.*" If they will ever bear this meaning in the New Testament, it is probably owing to the error of the Jews and the first disciples, in supposing that the end of the world and the end of the Mosaic economy would be the same. The proper signification of the phrase is, "*the end of the age;*" and it has an especial reference to the close of the Jewish dispensation, which was identical with the close of the apostolic age, the age of miracles, and of the personal presence of Jesus with his Church. "The word *aion*," says the learned Dr. Hammond, literally signifies *age*."

On the supposition that the promise of Jesus relates to real, personal presence, therefore, we see that it may relate

only to his personal presence with his apostles, during their ministry, and whenever two or three were gathered together to deliberate on the execution of their divine office. Such a promise we believe that Jesus might and did fulfil; but this surely would not prove his *omnipresence*, nor even his power of being in any two places at the same moment.

However, although we have no doubt that the occasional personal presence of Jesus was designed to be included in the meaning of this promise, it does not appear at all necessary to confine it to this meaning. He might justly be said to be with his apostles, by granting them miraculous aid, the guidance and the influences of the Holy Spirit, which we know that he constantly did throughout their ministry. Several circumstances favour the conclusion that this was, in part at least, the *nature* of the presence intended. In the parallel passage of Mark's Gospel, the same promise, in substance, appears to be expressed in different words. "And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues," &c. The Evangelist adds: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working *with them*, and confirming the word with signs following." In this way, then, Jesus was with his apostles, by enabling them to work miracles in confirmation of the Gospel,

It has now been clearly shewn, we trust, that the Trinitarian cannot fairly and reasonably derive the doctrine of our Saviour's essential omnipresence from these texts. All the conditions, which would be necessary to establish such a conclusion from the words of Scripture, are seen to fail him. We cannot better express our own views of the meaning of these passages, than in the language of Mr. Yates, in his reply to Wardlaw. "The words, 'Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world,' " he remarks, "were addressed by Jesus to the eleven Apostles, immediately before his ascension into heaven, when he sent them forth to preach the Gospel among all nations. The observation was intended as an assurance, that during their whole ministry Jesus would watch over *them* with a tender guardianship and affection, and that his care would extend to *them* in every place, preserving them from the dangers to which they would be exposed, and enabling them to exhibit the miracles by which the truth of their preaching would be irresistibly confirmed."



## ON PRISON DISCIPLINE.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—As your pages are open to all things which relate to the moral or social improvement of human beings, I venture to offer a few brief remarks on a subject deeply interesting to the philanthropist, and of the highest importance to the well being of society. In this age of intellectual progress, when the highest and most benevolent energies are put forth, to promote the dignity and happiness of our race; when, too, Legislators are cheered in their work of reformation, it is to be lamented, that so little is done to rectify what is wrong in our Prison Discipline. While the friends of education are prosecuting their praise-worthy schemes for illuminating the minds of the humbler classes, a cry is raised, that crime is on the increase. This charge may carry with it something of the semblance of truth, especially if we estimate the amount of crime by the multitude of offenders who crowd our gaols. But this would be an erroneous conclusion, for a long catalogue of commitments may present an appearance of crime, which in reality is not crime. In our days, the most frivolous offence is visited with months of imprisonment. In some of our agricultural counties, it is no uncommon thing to hear of prosecuting a peasant for taking a handful of sticks from the woods, to kindle his fire. The writer of this article has heard of a recent committal of a poor labourer, for taking a little milk from a cow one morning to quench his thirst. Owing to the ignorance and caprice of Magistrates, our county gaols are too often filled with persons who cannot be justly charged with crime, yet they are torn from their quiet homes, to herd with a band of desperate ruffians, and exposed to the baneful influence of profane discourse, and dissolute manners. I am borne out in my remarks by a Committee of the House of Commons, in the Session of 1828, who were appointed to examine the subject of criminal commitments, as the following extract will show.

“Your committee have much satisfaction in stating their confirmed opinion, that great part of the increase in the number of criminal commitments, arises from other causes than the increase of crime. Offences which were formerly either passed over entirely, or were visited with a summary

chastisement on the spot, are now made occasions of commitment to gaol and regular trial. Mr. Dealtry, a Magistrate for the West Riding of the county of York, says ‘I think one reason we may give for the increase of crime, or the greater exhibition of it to the public view, is the seizure and delivery to the police of all those who commit offences, that are styled offences at all. I remember in former days, persons were taken and pumped upon, or something of that sort; but now they are handed over to the police, and tried on it.’

Whatever may be the present amount of crime, it is my firm belief that it will not be lessened till the attention of the Legislature is turned towards a reformation in our prison discipline. Offences will exist under the best forms of Government, but their number may be greatly decreased; and their demoralizing influence abated, by placing the criminal in an appropriate situation for encouraging and promoting industrious and virtuous habits. Many a young offender leaves the prison better skilled in the arts of iniquity than before he entered it. When seized by the arm of justice, he is thrown into a dungeon with a multitude of old practitioners in crime, who gladly welcome him as an associate, and too often succeed in making him as dissipated as themselves. Having a Fry, a Buxton, and a Gurney, can no plan be devised for rescuing the prisoner from the corrupt influences of a crowd of offenders? Our brethren across the Atlantic have profitted by the exertions of those philanthropists; they have their prisons, what prisons ought to be, schools of reformation, and have sent, and continue to send, the criminal forth into society, morally restored. Mr. Stuart gives the following interesting details of the discipline practised in the state prison at Auburn, U. S. ‘When convicts arrive, they have their irons taken off, are thoroughly cleaned, clad in the prison dress. The rules of the prison are explained to them, and they are instructed by the keeper in their duties—to obey orders, and to labour diligently in silence,—to approach all the officers of the institution when it is necessary for them to speak, with respectful language, and never to speak to each other on any pretence; not to sing, dance, or do any thing having the least tendency to disturb the prison; never to leave the places assigned to them without permission; never to

speak to any person who does not belong to the prison, nor to look off from their work to see any one; never to work carelessly, or be idle a single moment. They are also told that they will not be allowed to receive letters or intelligence from or concerning their friends, or any information on any subject out of the prison. Any correspondence of this kind that may be necessary, must be carried on through the keeper or assistant keepers. A Bible is, by order of the State, put into each cell. New convicts are put to work at such trade as they may have previously learned, provided it be practicable, if not, or if they have no trade, the keeper selects such trade as appears, on enquiry, best suited to them. At the signal for breakfast, the convicts form in line in the shops, and are marched by the assistant keepers to the mess room, which they enter at two different doors, face around by their plates, standing till all have got their places, when a bell is rung and all sit down to their meals; but as some eat more and some less, waiters provided with large vessels, pass along constantly between the tables, taking food from those who raise their right hand in token that they have it to spare, and giving to those who raise their left hand to signify they want more. The tables are narrow and the convicts sitting on one side only, are placed fese to back, and never face to face, so as to avoid exchanging looks or signs. When the steward perceives that the convicts have done eating, or have had sufficient time for it, he rings a bell and all march to their work-shops. Assistant keepers are constantly moving around the galleries, having socks on their feet, that they may walk without noise, so that no convict can feel secure, but that one of the keepers may be at the very door of his cell, ready to discover and report next morning for punishment the slightest breach of silence or order. The house, containing between 500 and 600 convicts, is thus perfectly still. On Sundays the arrangement is the same, with this difference, that instead of working, the convicts are marched to the chapel, where divine service is performed by the chaplain. Such of them as are ignorant attend the Sunday school, which is admirably taught, and gratuitously, by students belonging to the theological seminary at Auburn!"

This is the discipline we want in our prisons. Why is it not adopted? Is it indifference to the moral improvement of the nation, or a fear of increasing the public expendi-

ture? True, all our prisons must be remodelled, and at a considerable expense; but this ought not to deter us as a nation from doing an act of justice and mercy. We can vote away large sums for building and repairing palaces, and even for bribing the West India planters to abandon their traffic in human flesh; why can we not spare a few thousands for reforming our prisons, for reclaiming the guilty, and restoring the fallen? I fear that our poverty is in soul and not in purse, otherwise this act of humanity would not be delayed. We want, and must have, a reform in our prison discipline. Without it we cannot effect any salutary improvement in the condition of the people. We may diffuse education, but much of its fruit will be blighted, when the moral atmosphere of society is so foul and polluting. Solitary confinement, supported by religious instruction and well regulated labour is now no longer a matter of speculation; it has been tried with the best results. We are told in a public report which has been lately issued from the managers of Auburn prison, that of 160 convicts discharged, of whom accurate accounts have been obtained, 112 have turned out decidedly steady and industrious, and only 26 decidedly bad. Let Britain follow the noble example which America has set before her, and she will do much for the honour and reputation of her people. Let her cleanse her prisons, and she will lay the best foundation for promoting her future peace, safety, honour and dignity.

PHILANTHROPOS.

#### PROPOSED SCHEME FOR A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

We have received copies of a "Proposed Scheme" for establishing a Church, on the Presbyterian model, for Great Britain and Ireland, "comprising as an essential ingredient that principle of Free Inquiry which has characterised the English Presbyterians for more than a hundred years. We have not room for the insertion of the entire plan in our pages; but we give a few of the chief particulars.

"Any Congregation of Christians who meet habitually for the public worship of Almighty God, may belong to this body so long as they conform to its rules.

Hence every member of this Church professes his belief in the existence, attributes, providence, and moral government of God; in the Di-

vine Mission, miracles, and resurrection of Jesus Christ ; and in the authority of the Holy Scriptures as the authentic records of Divine Revelation.

But it is a fundamental principle of this Church, to leave to every individual the unimpaired right of exercising his own private judgement in the interpretation of the Scriptures, so that no creed of human invention, and relating to doctrines which are controverted among the professed followers of Jesus Christ, can be imposed by this Church, or assent to such creed be required on any occasion whatsoever, without dissolving the bond of union among its constituent congregations, and destroying its title to the property which it possesses.

"The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Great Britain and Ireland shall meet once a year. Its meetings shall be public.

"Any minister or pastor of any congregation belonging to this Church is entitled to be present, and to speak, vote, and hold any office in the General Assembly. But a Congregation cannot have more than two ministers so qualified.

"The General Assembly shall also include Elders, Deputies or Delegates, having the same privileges with the ministers.

"Any university, college or academy for the education of ministers may be represented by a Delegate or Delegates in the General Assembly on the same terms on which a congregation is represented, provided that the education of such ministers is conducted with that provision for the exercise of private judgement and free inquiry on religious subjects which is the distinguishing characteristic of this Church.

"The General Assembly may divide the congregations into portions or provinces, determined by local convenience. The united congregations of each province shall be represented by a Synod.

"The General Assembly shall choose a Committee or Committees, and appoint one member of each Committee to be its convener ; such Committees to continue in office until the termination of the sittings of the next ensuing General Assembly, and to have power to add to their numbers.

Their business shall be more especially :—

1. To make the necessary arrangements for the next General Assembly.

2. To inquire respecting the desirableness of erecting Synods, or altering the limits of those which exist.

3. To inquire respecting the existing means of educating or providing ministers for this Church ; to consider whether those means are sufficient ; if not, to devise plans for supplying the deficiency, and with this view to confer on behalf of the Church, and to such an extent as they see fit, with the members of any existing university, college, or academy.

4. To inquire whether sufficient means and opportunities exist, and, if this is in any case doubtful, to provide sufficient means and opportunities, by which every child connected with any congregation in this Church may be instructed in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and the first principles of religion.

"No congregation belonging to this Church can appoint a minister except from among those who have been approved and licenced by the Church.

When a congregation is vacant (*i. e.* without a minister), the Church shall take care to supply it with preaching and the administration of



other ordinances, until the congregation shall supply the vacancy by the appointment of a minister.

*With a view to the discussion of the preceding plan, the following gentlemen will receive communications which should be addressed to them before December 10, 1833.*

Rev. H. Acton, *Exeter* ; Mr. Josiah Allen, 5, *Bennett's Hill, Birmingham* ; Mr. John Armstrong, 17, *Market Street, Manchester* ; Rev. R. Astley, *Shrewsbury* ; Rev. J. R. Beard, *Broughton, Manchester* ; Dr. Bostock, 22, *Upper Bedford Place, London* ; Rev. David Davison, M. A., *Rosomon House, Islington, London* ; James Esdaile, 24, *Upper Bedford Place, London* ; Rev. Franklin Howorth, *Bury, Lancashire* ; Rev. Henry Green, *Knutsford* ; Rev. Joseph Hunter, 30, *Torrington Square, London* ; Rev. Joseph Hutton, LL.D., *Leeds* ; Rev. William Johns, *Broughton, Manchester* ; Rev. Noah Jones, *Northampton* ; Rev. David Lloyd, *Presbyterian College, Caermarthen* ; Rev. J. P. Malleson, B.A., *Hove House, Brighton* ; Rev. R. Mortimer Montgomery, *Bury St. Edmund's* ; Rev. Thomas Rees, LL.D., *Sutton, Surrey* ; Rev. Edward Tagart, 3, *Addison Road North, Kensington, near London* ; Rev. James Taylor, 17, *George Street, Manchester* ; John Edward Taylor, Esq., *Market Street, Manchester* ; Rev. John James Tayler, B. A. 33, *Burlington Street, Oxford Street, Manchester* ; Rev. W. Wilson, *Newbury* ; Rev. John Wright, *Sunderland* ; Rev. James Yates, M. A., 49, *Upper Bedford Place, London* ; Joseph Brooks Yates, Esq., *West Dingle, near Liverpool*. \*

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\* We are requested to state that the gentlemen above named, are not in any measure pledged to an approval of the plan detailed ; and we apprehend there is no objection to its being also stated, that the proposed scheme originated with the Rev. James Yates, M. A.

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## POPULAR EDUCATION.

It was stated in the "Gospel Advocate," for September, (in remarking on Mr. Roebuck's motion in the House of Commons, for establishing a system of National Education) that "the system of mere reading and writing, now pursued in our schools for the poor, never can produce any extensively beneficial results :—the people must have *knowledge*,—real, substantial, aseful knowledge." It is gratifying to observe that this conviction is becoming general. The following observations from the last number of the "Edinburgh Review," on the narrow system of instruction pursued in the "National" or Bell's "Schools," are pertinent to the subject, and strikingly just ;—

In the National Schools, nothing can be more meagre and stingy hen the allowance of instruction doled out. It is comprised under

the heads of Reading, Writing, and Cyphering. By the first is to be understood the faculty of pronouncing and spelling English words, not of comprehending their import,\* still less the structure or grammar of the language :—the reading is rigorously confined to one subject. The cyphering goes no further than the first four rules of arithmetic ; the writing may be cultivated to any extent of mechanical dexterity ; for there is no limitation when the hand and not the head is to be exercised. Such is the sum and substance of the instruction given. The appointed clerical visitors seem much more anxious to enforce the strict rule of the founder, contained in Dr. Bell's Manual, than to encourage any deviations into more inviting regions of knowledge. It will not be denied, we think. by those friends of the system who know it best, and particularly by the intelligent teachers, that its tendency at least, if not its object, is to proscribe, as worse than useless, all knowledge which has not a direct and immediate reference to religion,—more especially to that form of it adopted by the Church of England ; and to dismiss the pupil, after three years' attendance, with the smallest possible amount of acquirement, and the least possible taste for reading.

Though children are destined no doubt to be subjects of a kingdom which the Divine Author of our faith has himself declared to be ' not of this world,' and though they ought, therefore, to be deeply imbued with principles and habits that will fit them for such a condition of existence, yet they are doomed to live previously, and to act their part in the great community of mankind,—with a thousand duties to perform, ideas to take in, and habits to acquire, which relate chiefly or solely to the world they live in ; that the Bible, being given us, not as a digest of all knowledge, but as a rule of faith and manners, cannot be expected to contain such information, and embrace such a stock of words and ideas, as it is desirable every child should possess, in order to become useful to himself and others : that it is impossible to keep the faculties of the young in healthful and improving exercise, without occupying them with various objects successively, and familiarising them with those realities of life and nature, which enable them to test, by the evidence of the senses, the amount, import, and truth of the information they have received ; that by insisting solely, or even chiefly, on spiritual matters, we must of necessity omit that acquaintance with the powers and properties of external nature, and the displays of divine wisdom and goodness in the arrangements of the world, which form the appropriate nutriment of the young faculties, and by which alone the mind can be prepared, as its powers expand and strengthen, for more profound and recondite views of religion ; that moreover, great risk is run by indiscreet zeal, of indisposing the youthful mind to divine truth ; of associating weariness and disgust with the act of reading and the business of instruction, as will be the case where the understanding is not or cannot be exercised ; and even of exposing the sacred volume, which should never be handled but with reverence and as a privilege, to be treated too lightly and familiarly, and coupled with vulgar or painful associations.

\* In one of the best of these schools, not one of a class, after reading a Scripture lesson they were quite familiar with, in which the word *alms* occurred, could give any explanation of the meaning of that word.

OBITUARY.—*Joseph Priestley, Esq.*

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The excellent man who is the subject of this memoir, was not insensible to the honour of a parentage, before which the accustomed lustre of birth fades away. But he did not repose on his "Father's merits." His highly estimable qualities shewed that he had abundantly profited by the precepts, the example, and the well-earned reputation of the individual, from whom he immediately descended.

Joseph, son of Joseph and Mary Priestley, was born at Leeds, July 24, 1768. Between the years 1776-1784, he was placed at school, successively at Devizes, French-Hay (near Bristol), Ware, and Birmingham. His destination being mercantile life, he next went, under the patronage of his younger maternal uncle [Mr. William Wilkinson] to Geneva. On his return, he was taken into the counting-house of Messrs. Samuel Vaughan and Sons, in London, and, subsequently, at Birmingham, into that of Mr. Russell. In 1787 his uncle, John Wilkinson, adopted him as his heir; but considerations extremely creditable to Mr. Priestley, soon occasioned them to separate from each other; nor even at a later period was their intercourse more than partially renewed. Thus situated, Mr. Priestley, in 1791, engaged in partnership at Manchester.

Having so far established himself, he married in 1792, Elizabeth, elder daughter of Mr. Samuel Ryland, of Birmingham, a lady to whom he had been long and tenderly and most deservedly attached. In 1793, his promising connection in trade was dissolved; his partner, of whom he always spoke respectfully, being unwilling to encounter, any longer, the obloquy of an union with the son of Dr. Priestley. The effect of this measure upon such a son may easily be conceived. In August of the same year, Mr. Priestley preceded his father to North America, where employing himself in agricultural pursuits, he continued till January, 1812; with the exception of a visit, of eighteen months, to his native country, on an interesting domestic errand. Soon after he had been in England this second time, another American war broke out. As the consequence, he became a resident here, instead of being only a visitor. He now joined an important manufactory in the neighbourhood of Dudley. In May, 1816, he was deprived of his amiable wife, never to be forgotten by her children, and by those whose privilege it was to be acquainted with her, as having combined superior powers of taste and judgment, and truly enlightened principles of conduct, with the most affectionate feelings and attractive manners. A few years afterwards, January 1822, Mr. Priestley experienced a similar and very severe calamity by the death of his younger son, Lindsey Priestley, in Paris. In April 1825 he married Mrs. Barton, one of the daughters of Dr. Joshua Toulmin; and in her congenial society he passed eight honoured and happy years at Cradley, near Stourbridge. On September 2, 1833, he died, at Exeter, after a short illness, which did not at first threaten a fatal termination, but the distressing progress of which the skill and assiduity of his medical attendants were unable to arrest.

It has been correctly and gratefully said that he was "a son worthy of such a parent" as Dr. Priestley. Like that distinguished man, he was, in his sphere, the intrepid and blameless supporter of Divine truth, of religious and civil freedom; like him firm in purpose, kind and sincere in heart, exemplary in conduct, and earnestly intent on being and on doing good.

Cultivating inflexible probity, Mr. Priestley was just and upright, far beyond the common meaning of the words. He compromised no opinions which he deemed of importance to the welfare of mankind, nor sacrificed his convictions at the shrine of Avarice, Vanity, and Ambition. Even at an early period of his life he proved himself capable of uniting the strictest honour and fortitude with the warmest affection; and at their dictates surrendered personal interests and prospects which, in the eyes of men less characterised by MORAL COURAGE, would have been irresistibly fascinating. There was a habit of decision in him, which they by whom he was intimately known most admired and respected; because they were sensible of the basis on which it rested, of the deliberate thought which accompanied and guided it, and of the consistency by which it was recommended.

As a husband, a brother, a parent, a master, a neighbour, and a friend, he was eminently prompt to every office of kindness, every measure for the relief of the sufferings of those around him, or for the advancement of their comfort. It would be difficult to find an individual more beloved and esteemed than Mr. Priestley was in his family: more happy in himself, or more successful in promoting the happiness of others. The benefits of his cheerful, affectionate disposition, of his willing and active services, were deeply felt, in particular, by the young persons residing under his roof, and by many of that standing, who were his frequent visitors.

When he settled at Cradley, he became well known to the late valuable minister of Park Lane Chapel, and was much regarded by him. His previous acquaintance with Mr. James Scott ripened into friendship, on their being placed not only in each other's vicinity, but in the reciprocal characters of minister and member of a christian congregation; in the prosperity of which Mr. Priestley took a cordial, judicious, and efficient interest.

Before he originally left England, he had found that some of Dr. Priestley's oldest and dearest friends were also his friends: he was often in their society, and invariably possessed, and fully experienced, their regard, which he felt to be an ample compensation for the neglect that he met with from one or two individuals who had been his former associates, and who were afterwards high in the world of Science and of Fashion. If he was ever received with marked coolness and indifference on account of a name obnoxious in courtly circles, such treatment had no other effect upon him than to increase, if possible, his profound and fervent yet well regulated respect for his father's character and writings.

He appeared before the public with considerable advantage, as the Editor of Dr. Priestley's "Memoirs" of himself, to which he communicated some additional information. His narrative, especially of his parent's last days, is remarkably engaging. Viewed

\* Christian Reformer, &c. vol. xix, p. 173.



simply as a *domestic picture*, it at once delights, impresses, and instructs : while as a record of the consolations and supports afforded by the Christianity of the Scriptures to the bed of death, it has yet richer value. The style throughout is plain, modest, unaffected, and must leave upon every reader's mind an entire persuasion of the Editor's fidelity.

Mr. Priestley made no pretensions to literary attainments and reputation. Nevertheless he read and reflected much on theology, history, politics, and political economy, ethics and miscellaneous knowledge ; and he formed his judgments with care and accuracy. Having laboured for many years under almost total deafness, he the rather sought resources in books, and other kindred means of amusement and occupation, and the pleasure and instruction which he gained from them he was always eager to impart.

It was natural for him to admire the free States of America, and most of their institutions. That a young man of principle, reflection, and sensibility, on witnessing the injustice and cruelty with which his illustrious father's services were requited here, should leave his native soil for the transatlantic shores, could not be matter of astonishment. But though he never ceased to look back with grateful esteem towards the community which had given him an honourable asylum, and had even made many of his interests identical with her own, his heart became more knit to England, in proportion as he contemplated the success and auspicious tendency and effect, of the grand measure of PARLIAMENTARY REFORM. Nor did he think it a common felicity that he was spared to behold the hundredth anniversary of his father's birth, and to know of the honours then paid to Dr. Priestley's memory in London, and in Birmingham. To learn that this "great, injured name" was so much better estimated, gave him the liveliest pleasure : and what he felt on the occasion he expressed in a most interesting letter,\* at the end of which he intimates without reluctance, the probability of his finding a grave in the country "which gave him birth."†

Much sooner than his stage of life and his usual appearance denoted, the intimation has been verified. His ashes rest within his native land. On Friday, Sept. 6, 1833, he was interred, with every token of domestic and filial reverence, in the burying ground of George's Meeting-house, at Exeter, the Rev. Henry Acton performing the funeral service, and delivering on the following Sunday, a discourse appropriate to the event, and extremely soothing to a band of mourners, whose habits and education have well prepared them both for reflecting the virtues of the pious dead, and for admitting the comforts supplied by Holy Remembrance and Hope.

JOHN KENTISH.

\* See *Christian's Reformer*, &c. as before.

† The language of Dr. Priestley himself. *Memoirs*, &c. ed. 4, p. iii.

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#### TO SUBSCRIBERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

S. "*On Christ's agony in the Garden*" has been received, and shall appear in our next. We are obliged to R. T. M., London, for his communication, and for the expression of his good wishes.



THE  
GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

No. VII.

JANUARY, 1834.

VOL. I.

THE BISHOP OF EXETER'S CHARGE.\*

THE appearance of the Bishop of Exeter's recent Charge to his Clergy, will excite no little attention throughout the country, in the minds of all who anxiously regard the present critical state of our ecclesiastical affairs. This may be naturally expected, from the great public importance of many of the subjects discussed in the Charge; and from the high reputation of its Author, as one of the most zealous and talented champions, if not in all respects one of the wisest friends, of the Church of England as by law established. The certainty that some considerable measures of Church Reform will be brought forward by the King's Ministers, in the ensuing Session of Parliament must give additional interest to this publication. But we, who, living within his Lordship's diocese, have been accustomed for the last three or four months to hear the praises of this production almost daily sounded in our ears,—who have been often told, how surely all schismatics and enemies to the Church would fall prostrate under its powerful arguments and awful censures, whenever it should issue from the press,—we may well be supposed to have rushed impatient to the perusal of its pages, turning over its every leaf with trembling fingers. On these grounds, general and special, we must crave the indulgence of our readers, if we give a larger portion of our limited space to an examination of this pamphlet, than we are perhaps ever likely to give again, at one time, to any one subject.

The literary merits of the Charge will not, we think, diminish the just fame which Dr. Philpotts has long since acquired, as a skilful and elegant writer, a sagacious and accomplished politico-religious polemic. The style is popular

\* "Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Exeter, by the Right Reverend Henry, Lord Bishop of Exeter, at his Primary Visitation, in the Months of August, September and October, 1833. *Second Edition.* London: John Murray."

and energetic. It is every where perspicuous, and occasionally marked by no ordinary felicity of expression. He always *seems* to say quite as much as he *does* say; sometimes, perhaps, rather more. It has been represented as rather the style of a political disputant, than of a reverend Bishop; as shewing greater familiarity with modern Parliamentary Debates, than with the ancient Fathers, or with grave Bodies of Divinity. Some have even called it a "pamphleteering" style; but this, we must needs allow, is an ill-natured name for it. For ourselves, we like the Bishop's style—much better than his matter.

His Lordship's pages commence with an acknowledgment of his having been greatly enlightened and comforted, in regard to the true state of public feeling, by this, his primary Visitation. In the text he tells his Clergy, that "gloom and darkness hang over every institution which we have been wont to regard with pride, with affection, or with reverence; above all, over that which is the most sacred of all—the Ark of the Lord—the Church." "That such is the general character of the present times," he observes, "needs, unhappily, no proof." But in a note he says, "Such was the impression under which I commenced my Visitation,—but such, I rejoice to say, was not the impression under which I closed it. With humble thankfulness to God, and with cordial acknowledgments to man, I am bound to state that, so far as the feeling of the PEOPLE can be collected, from its manifestations in these two great counties, the Church has nothing to fear, and every thing to hope, from the influence of that feeling, if fairly represented in Parliament." It will be good, if this experience shall teach the Bishop of Exeter, not in future to be so hasty, in concluding that every call for *Reform* is an indication of hostile feeling towards the institutions of the country. This has been, in too many instances of late, the grand assumption of the party with whom his Lordship has usually acted in public life; but it has been, in most instances, entirely groundless. He now perceives, we trust, that assertions of this kind, which to the mind of an alarmist, or a violent advocate for things as they are, "need, unhappily, no proof," may, nevertheless, be quite false. And yet we fear there is evidence, in this very passage of the Charge, that the mind of the Bishop is not cured of the weakness of estimating the opinions of the

people of England from the representations of those by whom he happens to be surrounded, however ill-qualified they may be to give him correct information. Does he really suppose, that his Episcopal Visitation afforded him a fair opportunity of collecting the *popular* feeling throughout "these two great counties"? We can assure him,—and we say it far more in sorrow than in exultation,—that in the present day the sympathy between the parochial Clergy and the mass of the people, is not always of that cordial nature, as to constitute them, the Clergy, either impartial judges or unprejudiced reporters of the popular feeling. Neither is it in Lordly Halls and comfortable Rectories, where Dr. Philpotts may have been hospitably entertained during his Visitation, that the true *vox populi* is wont to be heard. We do not say these things from any wish to disturb the happy conviction which his Lordship has now adopted,—that there is no want of attachment amongst the people at large to the institutions of the country. We believe it. But let it not be imagined, that the present almost universal demand for Church Reform, is one that can be effectually answered by some trifling and shadowy concessions. If the Bishop think so, he will soon be again undeceived as to his estimate of the popular feeling; and on the next discovery of this kind, he may not perhaps be quite so full of "cordial acknowledgments to man," whatever may be his "humble thankfulness to God."

The first distinct subject treated of in the Charge, is "The great and complicated subject of *tithes*." Dr. Philpotts is offended at certain fraudulent theories and wicked measures, which have been recently adopted in regard to tithes. He does not hesitate to declare, that "plunder and sacrilege" have already been committed by the Legislature, in reference to the Church in Ireland; though he charitably hopes that these crimes may not have been *intentionally* committed. There have been times, when such language concerning a solemn and registered act of King, Lords, and Commons, would have been termed seditious,—at least, if proceeding from any less privileged person than a Bishop. But, happily, those times are past. These are the days of the liberty of the press; and his Lordship is clearly a friend to the full enjoyment of that invaluable blessing. Plunder and sacrilege, however, are strong words: the unprejudiced reader naturally looks for some

justification of the use of them, but no such justification is offered in the Charge.

We are told that certain false theories concerning tithes have been lately put forward. "The first is an assertion, that all tithes in England were anciently, and in fairness ought still to be, divided into *four equal parts*, one for the Bishop, one for the Rector, a third for the Poor, and the fourth for the repairs of the Church." This theory the Bishop stoutly combats, and perhaps on just grounds, as far as relates to English tithes; for we have never seen any satisfactory evidence, that precisely such a distribution of tithes ever prevailed in this country. Yet it would have been more prudent, perhaps, in the Author of the Charge, to have rested his case entirely on this absence of proof, instead of attempting to demonstrate the falsehood of the theory by appealing to the Statutes of the realm. His demonstrations are faulty, and we confess they would not have much weight with our minds, against any tolerable degree of positive evidence. For instance, it does not follow that the parishioners of poor parishes might not be happy to receive the voluntary present of a tree from the Rector, towards repairing the Church, although they had a claim on some portion of the tithes for that purpose;—nor does it follow, because the care of the Chancel only seems to have belonged to the Rector in person, whilst the body of the Church was entrusted to the parishioners, that therefore the parishioners had no claim, by law or custom, to any part of the tithes towards defraying those expenses. Neither does it follow, because in Statutes of Henry VIII. and of Elizabeth, no mention is made of the support of the poor, among the necessary charges on ecclesiastical benefices, that therefore no such charge ever existed at any period, even in this country. We are not at present maintaining that the Bishop is wrong in his views of this matter. We are only saying that his pretended demonstrations are no demonstrations.

The principal fact on this subject we hold to be undeniable. There is the fullest proof, that in most parts of Christendom—(and why should this country be deemed an exception?)—the revenues of the Church generally, and tithes amongst others, were professedly collected and held for *charitable* uses,—for the relief of the poor, the widow, and the orphan. The Bishop says that there is no evidence

of this division of tithe among the poor, the Clergy, &c. "after tithe became *property*." What is this, but saying that the poor have been deprived of their share of the Church revenues, ever since the Clergy contrived to get the sanction of law for the peculiar and sole appropriation of those revenues to their own use? for we know not what else is meant by tithes having become *property*. Let it be remembered, what were the circumstances which first provoked an appeal to this theory concerning tithes. It was the extravagant pretensions of the Clergy themselves. They set up a claim of original and indefeasible right, and even of divine right, to every particle of tithe in the country. To this it was replied, that originally a portion of the tithe seems to have belonged to the poor, and a portion was for the repair of Churches; and that therefore the Clergy could not have had an original and indefeasible right to the whole of it. The facts appear to us to have been so far proved, as to constitute a sufficiently fair answer to such unfair pretensions. But after all, there is very little use in debating these questions about the original appropriation of tithes. The only serious question between the Clergy and the Public, is, as to the principle on which this species of property should now be dealt with. Dr. Philpotts says, that "to legislate about tithe on any principle not applicable to property of other descriptions, would be to violate the right, and shake the title, of all property whatever." Sweeping as this assertion appears, we see no real occasion to dispute it. We think the whole matter has been involved in needless mystery. Nothing is plainer to our minds, than that all rights of property are entirely the creation of law; they have been made by the laws, and are upheld by the laws, for the public good; and they may be modified or abolished by the laws, whenever it shall appear expedient to the supreme Legislature of the land. There may be the grossest folly and injustice, or there may be the greatest wisdom and patriotism, in such interference, according to the particulars of the case; but the abstract right and authority so to interfere always exists in the Legislature. If this be not so, the law recently passed respecting slave property in the West Indies, was an atrocious act of plunder; and so must have been hundreds of other laws, passed in all ages, in all civilized countries. There is no distinction, in this respect, between what is



termed public, and what is called private property. The true principle of the sacredness of private property, is not that the Legislature wants the abstract right to interfere with it, if it were necessary for the public safety or the public good;—but that all things considered, it rarely or never can be wise and expedient so to interfere;—because, as every person of comprehensive reflection perceives, the security of personal property is the grand, vital spring, of all peace and prosperity in the social condition of man. Tithes are so far from being any exception, that they seem to be a species of property in dealing with which there is the least occasion for delicacy and hesitation. As far as the Clergy are concerned, no man has or can have more than a life interest in them, which greatly lessens the risk of personal injustice. They have already been diverted to purposes which their original donators would have deemed horrible and blasphemous. If the Legislature which thus changed their appropriation, had no right to do so, then the Clergy hold the tithes at this day by an act of real plunder and sacrilege. If the Legislature had this right, it surely has the right again to interfere with the application of Church property, whenever this shall be required for the public good. We challenge the Bishop of Exeter to escape from this dilemma. But unless he can do so, he has rendered very little service to his order, by demolishing the theory of a four-fold division of tithes.

The next subject treated of in the Charge is “what is called *Church Reform*.” Here the Bishop seizes on an expression which he says was used by Lord John Russell, in a speech to some of his constituents at Teignmouth, concerning the necessity of a “*more equitable distribution of the revenues of the church*.”\* He is highly displeased

\* Surely this speech was not altogether the source from which the Right Reverend Prelate should have derived his views of the Church Reform to be brought forward by Ministers. He has given a note on the subject, which certainly does not mend the matter. He says, “this complaint was made by the Noble Lord close to a house which I then occupied at Teignmouth.” Did the Bishop let down his wig low-sash a little way, that he might hear the Whig orator address the populace? Then he exults over a very happy illustration of the injustice of this complaint, received on the same spot, a few days afterwards. For whilst the Bishop was still presiding at Teignmouth, he a clergyman came unto him, and showed that a poor old dame, who had been together with another living, was worth only £16 per annum. He gave the

with the insinuation implied in these words. He acknowledges that ecclesiastical revenues are not shared equally, or on any principle of proportioning emoluments to services; but he vehemently denies that there is any want of *equity* in this state of things. Indeed, my Lord! We had always thought that the labourer was worthy of his hire, and that the drone was worthy of nothing but contempt. And we should have supposed, that a state of things which completely reverses this, or leaves it entirely to the dispensation of chance, might be not unfairly described as inequitable. But then comes a qualifying clause:—"it is not true that there is any want of equity in this state of things,—at least that the Church is answerable for it." Perhaps not: be it so. Let us not trouble ourselves, in the present day, to settle who is most answerable for this state of things, but whether it exists, and how it is to be remedied. The Bishop has our permission to scold unhappy lay-impropriators at his pleasure,—in which occupation, to tell truth, he seems to find no little delight. We have no doubt that profligate Sovereigns, and profligate courtiers, have well played their part, along with established priesthoods, in converting the revenues of the Church to their own private ends. In general they have been exceedingly good friends. Sometimes they have been enemies; but that has been when they have quarrelled about the division of the spoil. In being thus over anxious to remove the blame of this alleged inequity from the Church itself, the Bishop gives another sign,—of which there are many in the course of his Charge,—that he mistakes the true spirit of the present times, on the subject of ecclesiastical reform. He is mistaken, if he supposes that this is a mere spirit of vulgar hostility to the Church and the persons of the Clergy. It is a desire to remove abuses, rather than to inculcate persons.

proper ecclesiastical revenues of the parish had been granted by King Henry VIII. to *John Lord Russell*. Then having mentioned this felicitous co-incidence, the Bishop "cannot but refer also to the case of the Vicarage of Tavistock, the revenues of which are held by the Noble Lord's father, the present Duke of Bedford." In all this there is an unbecoming littleness and personality. It shews a petty and retaliating disposition, like that which distinguishes mere worldly-minded politicians. The whole narrative must remind the Bishop's friends very painfully, of that sad story about Lord Durham and the Duke of Buckingham's letter. Dr. Philpotts is continually committing himself by some such indiscretion: his impetuosity hurries him into acts which the severe judgment of the world will pronounce to be rather *infra dig.* in a Right Reverend Bishop.

We hasten to animadvert on the brief, but singular notice, with which the Bishop of Exeter has been pleased to honour us Unitarians. He first warmly congratulates his Clergy on the "*very small number of meeting-houses*" within his diocese, belonging to Unitarians. He says there are only eleven in the great county of Devon; and in Cornwall, "*the case is still more satisfactory,*" for in that county there is only one. It gives us the most unfeigned pleasure, to inform his Lordship that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, either he, or his informant, the "*distinguished Unitarian Minister,*" has *over calculated* the number of avowed Unitarian congregations in Devon—by at least one. If this information should have the effect of still further increasing the delight of the Bishop and his Clergy, at the extreme fewness of the Unitarians—truly we shall not have spoken in vain. We are almost afraid to hint, (lest we should disturb this blissful impression,) that fifty years ago there was scarcely one avowed Unitarian society in all the diocese, and that fifty years hence we confidently expect there will be many more. We almost tremble to mention, that there are some plants which are distinguished by their slow growth, but which in the end are amongst the most wide-spreading and durable members of the vegetable creation. We have somewhere read a parable concerning a grain of mustard seed, which has often given us great comfort; but we shrink from presenting it to the Bishop's notice on this occasion. We have heard, indeed, that truth, and wisdom, and sound knowledge, and sober views of God and of duty, will not always spread quite so rapidly as fanatical error and wonder-stirring mystery. There may be some causes in the human mind to account for this; but we are no metaphysicians. On this subject, however, we may venture humbly to submit a problem to his Lordship for solution. If he should be too much engaged to attend to it himself, he can give it as an exercise to some young aspirant for Holy Orders. Why are there *no* Unitarians in Spain, Portugal, or Russia,—*some* in France, Geneva, and Poland,—*many* in Great Britain,—and *immense numbers* in the United States of America? Let the respective conditions of these countries be considered, in regard to the diffusion of general knowledge and education, in regard to the spread of intelligence and

civilization throughout all classes, in regard to liberty of religious opinion and profession, and exemption from the influence of an established Hierarchy? Taking these matters into consideration, let it be determined, why there are more Unitarians in one country than another. When this has been done, we will undertake to tell his Lordship, why there are not so many Unitarian meeting-houses in these remote, agricultural, and aristocratic districts of the land, as may be found within a circuit of ten miles in the diocese of his Right Reverend Brother of Chester, where dwell the reading, thinking, free-minded artisans of England. It is a circumstance which *we* shall not presume to account for, that throughout England, as throughout the world, just where there is most knowledge, most freedom from antiquated creeds and institutions, most actual exercise of personal judgment, *there* is Unitarianism most prevalent.

We very much fear, from the undue importance which Dr. Philpotts seems to attach to the number of our congregations in his diocese, that he has fallen into the common error of supposing that Unitarianism exists in England, at the present day, only as the profession of a sect. He is greatly mistaken. He may be assured, that there is no people in the religious world who are so little eager, as the sect of Unitarians, concerning the immediate increase of their numbers. They would, doubtless, in the present state of Christian societies, rather see men worship with them, than with other churches,—because they solemnly believe, that hereby their worship would be confined to the sole proper Object of worship, “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But that which they most desire and most rejoice to behold, is to see their views and principles, from their intrinsic truth and reasonableness, gradually influencing the sentiments of individuals belonging to all denominations of Christians. With this kind of evidence of the progress of their doctrines they are daily cheered in the present times. They see it amongst all sects. They see it, not least, in the most distinguished ornaments of the Church of England. There are some men now sitting beside his Lordship on the Episcopal Bench, from whose general views of Christianity we believe in our hearts that most English Unitarians, of the present day, differ infinitely less than either they themselves, or the world in general, suppose. Such men as Dr. Maltby and



Dr. Whately may still profess their belief in the Trinity ; and far be it from us, for one single moment, to question the perfect sincerity of their profession. But we say, nevertheless, that the views which these Prelates have so ably defended, in their published writings on St. Paul's Epistles, concerning some of the most fruitful and long-standing points of theological controversy, are Unitarian views,—not simply Arminian, but Unitarian views. And we say, moreover, that to Unitarian Authors in this country, to such writers as Locke, Taylor, and Benson, belongs the honour of having first demonstrated the Scriptural character of these views, before the mitred authorities of the Church of England had taken them under their patronage. Whilst Unitarians behold such signs of the advance of their *principles*, the Bishop of Exeter may be assured that they will never break their hearts about the comparative scantiness of their *numbers* as a sect.

The Author of the Charge denies our claim to the peculiar title of *Unitarians*. This is really something more,—no, it is something *less*,—than any thing we should have expected from Dr. Philpotts. We cannot in our consciences apply the maxim, “*parva parvos capiunt animos* ;” for though the Bishop has certainly now and then said little things, we are bound in all sincerity to acknowledge, that he is not a man of little mind. “I need not say,” he observes, “that *we* are really Unitarians.” We deny this, most peremptorily. We deny that there is either common justice, or common sense, in such an assertion. “But why not ?” the Bishop may ask ; “Are we not strictly believers in one God ?” First premising, that this has nothing at all to do with the question, we answer, with great respect for the honest convictions of Churchmen,—No. You are nominally believers in one God ; because, otherwise, you would set yourselves in direct opposition to the plainest declarations of the Bible. But really and practically, in your views of the Christian scheme, and in your modes of worship, you are believers in three Gods. Such, at least, is our clear persuasion on the matter. We know it is not yours. On this subject, we would humbly recommend to the Bishop's perusal a Paper which appeared in the “Gospel Advocate” for July last, entitled “Trinitarianism nominal Monotheism, real Polytheism.” When he has confuted the arguments of that Paper, he



will have done more to stay the progress of this dangerous heresy, than he will ever do by counting the number of our Meeting-Houses. This, however, we repeat, has nothing at all to do with the question. The term Unitarian does not describe, and was never meant to describe, a believer in one God. It signifies a believer in one God *in one person*,—in direct contra-distinction from Trinitarian, which means a believer in one God *in three persons*. It is the correlative term, not of Pagan or Polytheist, but of Trinitarian. To say, therefore, that a Trinitarian is a Unitarian, is nothing less than saying, that long is short, or hot is cold. “They call themselves Unitarians *distinctively*,” says the Bishop. Certainly we do; not, however, if it displease our brethren, distinctively from those who believe in three Gods, but distinctively from those who believe that the Godhead consists of three persons. Surely we have some fair claim to such a distinctive appellation.

We are further told, that we “have departed most widely from the essential and fundamental doctrines of the Gospel;” and that we “*degrade* the majesty of our Divine Redeemer to a level with man’s nature.” All this of course. Such are the views which every conscientious Trinitarian must entertain of our doctrines; though his charity for our persons, might lead him to use some less opprobrious, or less equivocal term, than “*degraded*.” To such statements we can only reply, that in our sincere and earnest belief, the result of much thought and much inquiry, we have not departed from, but returned to, the essential and fundamental doctrines of the Gospel; and that we do not degrade the majesty of our Saviour, since we ascribe to him precisely those honours of nature, character, and office, which are claimed for him in the Holy Scriptures. General assertions admit only of general answers. Whenever the Bishop, in charging his Clergy, shall be pleased to attempt the confirmation of these assertions, by any particular proofs, whether from reason or from Scripture, we promise him, (God willing,) that his arguments shall receive such a particular examination at our hands, as every thing proceeding from his pen will unquestionably deserve.

On one other point we must endeavour to set the Bishop of Exeter right concerning our opinions. He says, that we “depreciate the atonement wrought for us by our

Saviour's death, representing it merely as an act of exemplary obedience." In great seriousness, we do assure him that he is again mistaken. We do not regard the atonement wrought for us by Christ, as merely an act of exemplary obedience. We do not regard it as an act of obedience at all. We look upon the atonement as a *state*, a change in the *relation*, between men and God; in establishing which state indeed, in working which change, the exemplary obedience of Christ was a great and moving cause. We hope we shall not be deemed presumptuous in saying it, but truly the Bishop's theological conceptions on this subject do not seem to be remarkably lucid. We had always thought, that the atonement itself was not any act which Christ did, but something which we have received through Christ. We are sure this is the view given of it by the Apostle, in the only passage of the English Version of the New Testament where the term occurs. "Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." According to this authority, we think the atonement consists in the blessed effects of God's being in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. We think it is the blessed result of the operations of divine wisdom and goodness, bringing men, through the ministry of Christ, by the influence of Christian faith and love, out of their sins into a state of peace and favour with God. We do not suppose, certainly, that Christ, by shedding his blood, pacified the wrath of God, paid an exact and infinite price to the justice of God, and thus literally purchased the forgiveness of sins. Does Dr. Philpotts think so? If he does, where will he find any countenance to these notions of a barbarous, scholastic theology, in the beautiful pages of Scripture? We believe that the death of Christ, together with all that he taught, did, suffered, or experienced, as the divinely appointed Mediator of the new covenant, were the means by which the work of Christian redemption was completed; but we think the sole original and primary cause of all this, was not the merits of Christ, but the free grace of God. Thus far we have said our catechism to the Bishop. We shall be most happy to proceed further, whenever he may have the kindness to question us.

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## TO THE EDITOR OF THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

SIR,—The following humble attempt to translate the beautiful Epitaph on the great Erasmus, is much at your service, if deemed suitable for the pages of the "ADVOCATE."

W. E.

*Park Wood, 23rd July, 1833.*

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Defunctus vitâ, longique laboribus ævi,  
 Hâc situs est tandem doctus Erasmus humo ;  
 Quem licet extremâ rapuerunt fata senectâ,  
 Et vitæ saturum sopiit alta quies,  
 Nos tamen hunc velut immaturo funere raptum  
 Flemus, et effusis diffluimus lachrymis,  
 Ille igitur periit, et quondam illa, illa diserta  
 Et dulci manans nectare lingua tacet.  
 Ingeniumque sagax et amor virtutis et æqui  
 Omnia sub parvo condita sunt tumulo.  
 Illum igitur canos Virtus lacerata capillos,  
 Et Charites lugent, luget et ipsa Fides.  
 Collectasque rosas Permessi ad flumina Nymphæ  
 Inspargunt sacro Pierides tumulo.

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Tired with the race of life from youth to age,  
 Erasmus sleeps serenely in the tomb ;  
 Yet we lament the venerable sage,  
 As wither'd immaturely in his bloom.  
 He vanish'd, and the eloquence expired  
 Of that enchanting tongue, whence nectar flowed ;  
 Wisdom in Wit's embroidery attired,  
 And Truth that in his generous bosom glow'd,  
 Him Virtue with dishevel'd hoary locks,—  
 The Graces Him,—and Faith herself deplore ;  
 And where Permessus foams amid the rocks  
 Of Helicon, with wild, funereal roar,  
 In tears the Muses sprinkle from their bowers,  
 Their votaries urn with amaranthine flowers.

## THE LITTLE BROOK AND THE MOUNTAIN TORRENT.

A ROARING torrent came from the mountains, and discharged its noisy waters into the Ocean. A gentle rivulet stole through a peaceful vale, and fell unseen, almost unheard, into the same mighty deep.

"I" said the boasting torrent, "have rolled from the rude Tor of ages, through wilds on which the foot of man has never trod." "And I," murmured the rivulet "have rendered fertile the green meadows of the industrious husbandman, and have blessed the busy village with my store of liquid beauty."

"Well hast thou done my gentle tributary," said the voice of old Ocean, "but as for thee, rude stream, return to thy desert haunts, I despise thy vaunting: that which the Almighty has formed is for *use*, not for *vain boasting*."

## THOUGHTS ON THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—The following thoughts were suggested by reading that admirable paper in the Gospel Advocate for September, "the Clergy and the Creeds,"—and they may not, perhaps, be misplaced in your valuable Publication. It is not intended to institute an inquiry respecting the Authorship of this creed, about which so much has been written, it is sufficient for our purpose that such a creed exists, and is used as a portion of the service of the Established Church of England; but it is proposed to examine some of the paragraphs composing it, and adduce passages, obtained from the authorised Version of the Old and New Testaments, opposed to the assertions therein contained. These remarks apply only to the Father and the Son, for should they be accepted another paper will be forwarded on the "Holy Ghost."

1st.—This creed commences with denouncing everlasting perdition on all who do not hold the Catholic Faith—which, it goes on to say is, to "worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity," &c. Such language as this cannot be found in the Bible; and is it not strange that the first sentence, the foundation stone (if the expression may be used) of this Trinitarian "Confession of Christian Faith,"

should not be found in the "Christian's Bible," or any words analagous? It might have been expected, that the first sentence, at least, of a declaration of belief should have borne the impress of Scripture authority; but in the New Testament we have set down for us by an Apostle, a form of belief so simple as to be understood by the "poor" to whom "the gospel is preached:"—"believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved." Here is an expression which requires no prostration of the intellect—a plain fact which the meanest capacity can comprehend, and which sets at nought the clause at the commencement of this creed, that all who do not believe the passages thereafter contained, shall perish everlastingly.

2nd.—"But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal."

For this assertion there is no proof:—on the contrary, the Almighty is often represented as saying—"I am God, and there is none else." And again—"My Glory I will not give to another." "I am God and *there is none like me.*" Hence it follows God has no equal, or any to share his Majesty.

3rd.—"Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost."

The Almighty says:—"To whom will ye liken me, or to whom shall I be equal." And Jesus says:—"My Father is greater than I."—"My Father is greater than all." Then why should those attributes be forced on our Saviour which he never claimed, which he always taught belonged to God alone?

4th.—"The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible."

All men must be fully aware of our inability to find out the Almighty to perfection; but we are satisfied that as far as it is necessary for mortals to know Him, Jesus Christ has revealed Him. Our Saviour has said—"No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him." And it is elsewhere written—"Secret things belong to God"—of course to the exclusion of every other being; and this is supported by the assertion of Jesus, who, when speaking of the day of judgment, says: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, not even the Angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father



only." But how far, or in what light, it can be said of the Son that he is incomprehensible is quite another matter: if it is contended we cannot find out his asserted divine Nature and Godhead, and equality with the Father, we must certainly plead guilty; and we presume this is the point to which it is meant to refer; we plead guilty because we have no information on the subject, either from Jesus himself or his Apostles. But if it be meant that we cannot comprehend the *doctrine* preached by Jesus Christ, we then differ, because we believe that what he has taught for our salvation is all that it is necessary for us to know, and is so clear and simple that a wayfaring man though a fool cannot err therein. But if our Trinitarian fellow Christians will envelope the plain statements of our Saviour and his Apostles with a mantle of MYSTERY, and then say such doctrines are incomprehensible, we envy them not the feelings engendered by such a course.

5th.—“The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.”

Of the eternity of the Father, there is, there can be, no doubt:—it is proclaimed in all His works and ways—it is affirmed by His Prophets, by the Apostles of His Son, and by Jesus himself—but of the Son it is never asserted. A little attention, and we shall discover that this very creed, although so boldly asserting here that the Son is eternal, contradicts itself, for in another paragraph it is said of Christ that he is “begotten of the Father.” Now any man who will consider the meaning of the word *begotten*, must clearly perceive that there was a period when the begotten had not an existence, equal with the begetter: consequently Christ having been begotten of the Father must be inferior to Him, and can neither be His equal, or be eternal.

6th.—“The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet they are not three Gods but one God.”

The Scriptures abound in passages affirmatory of the Father's Unity; Jesus asserts his own inferiority; the whole tenor of both the Old and New Testament teach this great and glorious truth; yet this creed opposes such language, and holds there are three Gods. “Thou shalt have no other Gods besides me.” “For there is One God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ

Jesus." "To us there is but One God, the Father." By what violation of every rule of speech the assertions contained in the foregoing paragraph can be made, and are to pass current with the religious world, is what no man, who is not determined to believe such assertions, can tell. That three are but one, and that one makes three, equally perfect, yet not three perfects; that three Beings are but one Being, and that one Being is three Beings, not even the greatest mathematician can understand. But the laboured attempt to prove a Trinity, after all, even if it were proved, taken on<sup>r</sup> their own grounds, amounts to nothing; for immediately as the assertion is made that a Trinity exists—in the very next paragraph we find a negative; and men are forbidden by the Catholic religion to say what they had already said, viz. that there is a Trinity. They are not to say that there are three Gods (because they know it is not to be found in the Bible) for if there are three, why not thirty? and so they belie their whole creed, and come at last to the conclusion, that there is but one God. But not content with thus contradicting themselves, further on they say of Christ, that he is "Perfect God:"—now what is meant by this but that he is indeed—*The God, Jehovah, Almighty*? And so they say he is: take for example—"Very God of very God." Further on still they speak of Christ as sitting at the right hand of the Father, who they say is also God, Almighty. Now, if Christ is Perfect God (Almighty) and the Father is Perfect God (Almighty) does it not follow that there are two Perfect Gods? (Almighty.) Oh! no; shocking! But so it is. Here are two Persons, Substances, Essences, Beings, call them what you please—the Son, (Perfect God) equal in every respect to another Perfect God, sitting at the right hand of the Father, partaking in every iota of His nature and attributes, yet not distinct, but the same identical God. Then the Son (God) leaves the Father (God) to come to judge the quick and the dead. Here, then are plainly two distinct and separate Beings, performing separate offices, and each is said to be Perfect God. Then does it not follow that there are two Gods? But this the Trinitarian denies. Then why all that vituperation against those who worship in simple Unity, that Being, whom *they* are at last compelled to acknowledge, when pressed closely to it, the only true God?

EXAMINER

## THE PROGRESS OF VICE.

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“Principiis obsta ; serò medicina paratur,  
Cùm mala per longas convaluere moras,”

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‘LITTLE sins,’ as they are sometimes called, often prepare the way for the commission of the most atrocious crimes. Beginnings of evil, apparently small, frequently lead to the most lamentable results. Men do not *suddenly* become either prominently virtuous or disgustingly depraved. This is a *gradual* work. There is no fatal gulph of vice lying so near the path of virtue that the truly upright man may fall into it unawares. Ere he reaches it, he wanders from the right way by some one of the many paths which wind downwards, perhaps almost imperceptibly to the fatal spot. The margin of that path is decked with flowers, each looking fairer as he advances, but each withering as he gathers it. At length he comes in sight of his danger ; and either summons up all his courage and resolves to return, or, as is too often the case, sinks into the fatal abyss.

He who has had the inestimable advantage of a religious education, does not plunge at once into the extreme of iniquity. Some desire or affection is permitted to lay hold on a forbidden object. In the companions of his youth he discovers similar views and desires, and hence he begins to think them general, perhaps natural, and for that reason he strives to believe them sinless. His companion, probably with a less tender conscience than his own, beckons him onward in the forbidden path—he hesitates—fears—but follows. Reflection ensues, but reflection is painful. Conscience tells him of his error and warns him of his danger. He listens to the severe but merited reproof ; and resolves, as in the sight of a holy God, to guard against a second departure from duty. His resolutions of amendment silence for a time the rebukes of his faithful monitor ; and determining henceforward to avoid the path of sin, and thus avert the consequent misery, he thinks himself secure.

But virtuous resolution once broken through, requires a double guard. Again the desire of pleasure, the love of praise, or perhaps the fear of reproach, tempts him from the straight-forward road. His former resolutions, if thought on at all, seem for the moment to have been need-

lessly severe, and adapted only to diminish his happiness ; they are therefore disregarded. But it is only to add poignancy to his remorse. He remembers that God who witnessed his former resolutions, his penitential sorrow, his earnest desire after renewed obedience and happiness, has again witnessed his departure from duty. He dreads his awful displeasure and fears to supplicate forgiveness.

But the stings of conscience soon come to be less severely felt. His deluded vision seems to see the paths of virtue and of vice winding nearer to each other. The cultivation of pious affections is neglected. Religious duties are disregarded. Not only does he by degrees omit his wonted approaches to a throne of grace, dreading to reflect upon his conduct, or to seek mercy and aid from above ; but vice, by becoming familiar, loses its deformity. Scenes which, before his taste was vitiated and his mind depraved, he could have looked upon only with horror, he now views with indifference. Those who warn him of his danger, are regarded with no better feeling than contempt. A taste for the pleasures of religion is lost—its duties are considered burdensome, useless, or fitted only for enthusiasts, and soon follow the desire and endeavour to regard Christianity itself as mere fable. He strives to envelope the sun of righteousness with the chilling darkness of infidelity. But in this darkness he himself walks but only with doubts and fears. The bright beamings of a happy and endless futurity which illumined his infant mind, have not been wholly obscured. His moments of solitude are interrupted by recollections of a mother's affectionate instructions. He remembers the time when his youthful mind was directed to one great and good Being, as the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the universe, who is guiding his creatures onward to endless existence, and to endless bliss—when he was encouraged to search the Scriptures as the best guide of life, and the source of the purest consolation in the hour of sorrow and in the prospect of death. He remembers how warmly a mother pressed him to her heart ere he left the roof of his boyhood—how affectionately a father commended him to the protection of the Father of all—how earnestly they both bade him prepare for a *future* world, where they hoped at length to meet again to part no more. But he strives to believe that there is no such future! He dares not think of

a life beyond the grave, for then the unwelcome—the dreadful thought of a righteous retribution presses upon his mind.

Yet if there should be a future? the idea is appalling, and he strives to banish it! He collects all the futile arguments which unprincipled disputants have urged against Christianity, and, endeavouring to content himself with these, he spares himself the labor of impartial examination, and strives to bury his fears in the icy gloom of annihilation. He now advances more fearlessly in the path of vice. He delights to ridicule religion and its professors, as a means of banishing its useful impressions from his mind. As he no longer sees virtue to be necessary, he makes no effort to attain it. Thus he sinks to the lowest grade of intelligent beings. His life is a continued scene of sensual indulgence. His end is wretchedness and despair; and no one laments his untimely death, but the parents who weep over ‘the misfortune of having such a son.’

W. J. O.

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## REFLECTIONS ON CHRIST'S AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

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THERE is no character which the page of history, sacred or profane, unfolds to our notice, in which we feel so deep an interest as in that of the great Teacher of our religion. Every sincere disciple of his must feel, the more he makes the character of Jesus his study, that it is full of food for thought. Every incident of his life, every scene through which he passed, and every circumstance, however remotely connected with what he did, or taught, or suffered, we feel to be of importance, because connected with him with whom are connected our dearest interests and our brightest hopes. The history of his life, as given us by the sacred historians, is extremely brief; but short as it is, we are liable to overlook many of its beauties, as well as the excellences of his character by a too general and hasty perusal. It is true, that by reading the whole in connection, we see best the general bearing of events and circumstances, their uniformity and fitness, together with the originality of the Saviour's character; but it is,



we conceive, by taking certain portions of his history, and making them separately the subject of our attentive study, that we arrive at some of the most delicate and interesting traits of his character.

His Agony in the Garden, as it is commonly called, affords a subject for reflection, interesting and important in various points of view : it unfolds no slight degree of evidence in favor of the Gospel history, and it furnishes proofs most decisive of his humanity, or that he was, as to nature, what his Apostle Peter declared him to be, "a Man approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him." In confirmation of these remarks, let us briefly notice what the sacred historian Matthew has placed on record concerning this event.

Having informed us that Jesus went with his disciples, after partaking of the Passover with them, to a place called Gethsemane, he adds, that "he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy," or deeply *afflicted*, which would better express the meaning of the Evangelist than the word heavy in its present acceptation.

The two sons of Zebedee, John and James the elder, as he is sometimes called, with Peter, appear to have been the disciples whom Jesus treated with peculiar regard and tokens of his confidence. On several occasions, in the course of the Gospel history, we have mention of their being thus in particular selected, when something interesting and important was going to take place. There was most likely something in their characters and dispositions, which induced their great master thus to notice them : for it would by no means harmonize with *his* character or the rest of his conduct, to suppose, that he was influenced by any thing bordering on weakness or mere caprice. "Then said he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death ; tarry ye here and watch with me." Let not the Saviour's request in thus wishing his friends to stay by him be thought weakness. It was human nature ; and it may be taken as some evidence in favour of the truth of the narrative, that this little incident thus so casually mentioned, is one which we see to be extremely natural when we carefully consider it : for whenever a person is deeply oppressed by a burden of sorrow, though it is painful to mingle in the common and busy scenes of life, or to be surrounded

by many individuals, yet the society of a friend or a few, is peculiarly grateful and consoling. It is that, to which every good heart naturally clings, and which it never fails to seek. Who has ever felt the pangs of severe affliction, without feeling the truth of this? We may therefore, value the mention of this little incident in our Saviour's history, since besides being some evidence of its truth, it seems to place his character before us in a most interesting point of view, by shewing that his were human feelings.

“And he went a little further and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” And there is nothing more natural, than for a truly pious and devout mind, when weighed down by affliction, to seek the consolations arising from a communion with heaven and the Father of all Spirits. There is something in the very act of prayer, when engaged in with devout feelings and affections, which never fails of producing a soothing and salutary effect. We have evidence in the narrative we are noticing, that this was the case with our great Master on this eventful occasion. But before noticing this, let us just allude to the tokens of seriousness, and of deep and heartfelt humility, with which he engaged in the act of devotion. “He fell on his face;” or bowed himself to the earth. And this should teach us that pride and prayer but ill consort; and that to engage in it with thoughtlessness and levity is outraging all that is decent, serious and devout. And there are those, who from the Saviour's example, on this as well as other occasions, ought to feel themselves reprov'd, who wantonly distract the attention, and disturb the devotions of a whole congregation, by their untimely and unseemly intrusion.

And Jesus “cometh unto the disciples and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, what! could not ye watch with me one hour?” There was something so careless and unfeeling in this conduct of the Apostles—the favoured ones also, whom he had so particularly noticed,—that we have no occasion to be surprised that he should have felt somewhat hurt, and have thus expressed his displeasure. A truly good heart, with fine toned feelings in their full flow of beneficence, in other words, those who are the least capable of inflicting these kinds of wounds, always feel them the most acutely when they receive them from

others. But his rebuke is mildness itself, and is connected with his usual kindness and desire to do good, and hence his seasonable advice, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." These latter words, he doubtless used with reference to himself, and his own feelings at that moment; and seems to have been desirous to teach his followers how to act, and how to seek strength and consolation, when they came to be tried. We can easily understand why he addressed this gentle reproof to Peter in particular, if we call to mind, how that apostle an hour or two before, had been hastily boasting of his confidence, and over-rating the strength of his attachment to his great Master, of the weakness, or rather the fickleness of which, he was going before the morning light arose, to give, as Jesus had forewarned him a still more lamentable proof.

"He went away a second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup *may* not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done." Observe that the language which our Lord uses in this, his second petition, is materially different from that which he had used on the former occasion. He had then expressed something amounting to a wish, to be saved from the sufferings which awaited him. And his doing so is extremely natural, when considered as the first burst of his sorrow, and the first words in which his agonized spirit found language to express the intensity of its feeling.

We should bear in mind, that when he first came into the garden, and took aside Peter, and the other two Apostles, he had just before been speaking of his approaching sufferings; of the ignominious death he must die; and of the many painfully aggravating, and to a mind like his, deeply wounding circumstances, which would precede and attend it. Thinking and speaking of these, had wound up his mind and feelings to a state under which nature was almost sinking. The sacred writers seem to have been in want of words to give us an adequate idea of the agony which convulsed his tender frame. They have mentioned one circumstance familiar to every reader of the New Testament, which seems to show that his sufferings were most intense. In the first moments of their aggravated agony he had begun his earnest but most natural prayer. Soon, however, was the

tranquilizing influence of devotion manifest in both his words and manner. On the second occasion, the language of his prayers shews not the fear, or despondency, or wish to be saved from the trials which he was going to endure, all of which had so marked the commencement of his devotions on this memorable occasion. It is in allusion to it, that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "he was heard in that he feared, when he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death:" and he said himself, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." But this fear seems to have greatly diminished, his tears ceased to flow, and his sorrow to have subsided into a dignified calmness, by the soothing influence of devotion, in which he gained that strength and resignation which enabled him to have no wish but to do the will of his heavenly Father.

There is one little circumstance mentioned in a casual manner in this narrative, which serves to shew how completely he had regained his self-possession and serenity of mind. Returning to the apostles, and again finding them in the arms of sleep, and thinking most likely, that rest and peace would for some time to come be little their portion, in any sense of the word, he calmly said, "Sleep on now and take your rest, behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." As if he had said, "I do not require you longer to watch; my spirit is tranquilized, and I will not disturb your peaceful slumbers so soon to be broken, and your waking thoughts occupied by an event which you little expect: which will overwhelm your minds with astonishment, banish far away the peace in which you now repose, and pierce your hearts with many bitter sorrows. The shepherd is going to be smitten, and the sheep of his flock to be scattered far and wide; and from this night toils and troubles, many and severe, await you. 'Sleep on then, and take your rest:' it is the last which you must have in my society, with me for your friend and instructor; soon we must separate, and you will have to reach the state to which I am going by long and painful roads." Such we may suppose to have been our Saviour's train of thoughts, while on this eventful night he was watching by the side of the apostles, till the traitor Judas, and the ferocious multitude to whom he was the guide, entered the garden.

Many reflections of a more general character, than the foregoing, might be founded on this part of the Saviour's history—but we will confine ourselves to two : and the first is, that the artless, unadorned simplicity of the narrative, the natural fitness of the incidents and circumstances which are mentioned, their agreement with one another, and this becoming the more apparent the more we examine them, may surely be taken as some, and as no slight degree of evidence, in favour of the truth of the history. Any one who has ever made the marks his study, by which fact is to be distinguished from fiction, will feel a moral conviction, that unless the events which are here spoken of, and the incidents which are so naturally connected with them, had actually taken place, they would not have been mentioned in the way they are. It is easy to pen fiction ; the great difficulty is to make it consistent with itself, and to betray no proofs that this difficulty *has* been felt. Let fictitious characters be brought forward in a scene like that which we have been noticing ; let the circumstances in which they are placed, the words, the actions, and incidents ascribed to them, be as numerous as they are here, in so short a space, and it is commonly no difficult matter to know the degree of credit to which they are entitled. For, consistent as they may on a first and slight view appear, yet when closely examined, part by part, there is as much difference to be seen between them and a narrative of facts, as there is between the beautiful productions of nature, and the ever so perfect imitations of them by art, when both are viewed through the medium of microscopic vision.

And again, from this part of our Lord's history, it is easy to gather proofs, many and most conclusive, of his proper humanity, such as those contend for, who believing in the Supremacy of the Eternal and Almighty One, receive, and rejoice to receive, the instructions of the Saviour as the Messenger of His truth and grace. One argument in defence of these important points, founded on a plain fact of Gospel history, is of infinitely more weight in the estimation of him who takes the sacred Scriptures as the only sure foundation of his faith, than all that Councils may decree, or wrangling disputants imagine they decide. Turning from these, let him who wishes to know the truth as to the character and nature of his great Master, study



the history of his life, and rest his faith on the plain facts there unfolded. Let him attend the Teacher of truth through the various scenes of his life, not forgetting that which we have been noticing. Here, as in other places, he is seen with human feelings and fears; with human sorrows and afflictions; and seeking and receiving consolation from Him to whom he has taught us in like manner to pray, and to put our trust in, as his Father and our Father, his God and our God.

Had his followers been content with what he taught them, had they never sought to find out meanings never intended, they would never have been perplexed and bewildered beyond measure with this scene of his sufferings. They would not have shrunk from it as something incomprehensible; or thrown over it the shadow of mystery; or endeavoured to make of it a mere mockery; have insulted reason and tampered with the word of divine Truth, and told us that the Saviour, in the proper sense of the word, only *appeared* to suffer. That though he said that his soul was "exceeding sorrowful," it was not the real Christ that was so: that though the whole of his frame was convulsed with the agony of the deepest anguish, he had a nature which felt nothing: that though he *prayed*—and that act furnishes a host of evidence, for it marks the creature, and not the Creator, the worshipper and not the Object of Worship—that though he prayed, it was only a part of him, or what is called his human nature, that did so; and to crown this climax of what we want a word to express, that though he referred a wish of his to the will of another, that will was his own. If liberties like these are to be taken with the words and actions of our great Master, as well as with the plainest facts of Gospel history, surely it behoves those who do so to show us their authority. If, as is commonly the case, they give us nothing but their mere assertion, we have no difficulty in knowing what we have to do;—we place that assertion in juxtaposition with the word of revealed truth, and we say of the one—here is the rock of our salvation, the sure and never to be moved foundation of our faith,—and there is the moving sand of human opinions; and he that can hesitate in his choice between them, would hesitate in choosing between light and darkness, truth and error, good and evil.

## THE EXILE OF SCILLY.

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“The worthy Mr. John Biddle, who in the time of Oliver Cromwell was, after repeated imprisonment, banished to the Scilly Islands, for the confession of his belief in One God the Father.” (See *Toulmin's Life of Biddle*.)

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Along thy shore, thou sea-girt isle,  
 Where rocks and waves in ceaseless strife  
 Bid the white foam for ever boil,  
 And still ensnare the seaman's life,

Thou lone and far Kassiterid,\*  
 What solitary wanderer strays,  
 Now drooping low his pensive head,  
 Now straining o'er the deep his gaze ?

Say, of thy hardy sons is he,  
 The amphibious natives of thy strand ?  
 Or has he crossed thy stormy sea,  
 An exile from his native land ?

Thy sons, still buffeting the storm,  
 Wear the blue livery of the deep,  
 The shaggy frieze, so thick and warm,  
 The drenching sprays aloof to keep.

His sable weeds the fashion show  
 Of gentler men, who cities fill ;  
 Here less in place, where tempests blow  
 The driving mists his frame to chill.

Nor meet we here that studious mien,  
 That lingering gait, and absent eye,  
 That tell of long-drawn thought within,  
 Of doubts profound, and musings high.

For Nature here, in sterner mood,  
 Laps not her darlings in repose,  
 Crowning light toil with plenteous food,  
 And scattering round the fragrant rose.

\* One of the Kassiterides.

But man, her child, she straitens here,  
To brace with toil his sinewy frame ;  
And nerves his soul to spurn at fear,  
Through danger and distress the same ;

His daily bread, on rolling seas,  
Midst daily perils doomed to obtain ;  
Enrisked by every freshening breeze  
That ruffles the resentful main.

But see ! yon pilgrim climbs the brow  
That lifts so high its granite grey,  
He sits—he rests—he parleys now,  
Or seems to parley, with the sea.

“ Ye rushing waves, all hail !  
Though to my thoughts ye tell  
Of angry storms that shake the distant world ;  
Of battles’ cursed din, *the sound of arms*  
Sympatriot bands between,  
And struggling Monarchs from their empire hurled.

Yet that is far away.  
The broad and boisterous sea  
Rolls between me and England’s peopled coast :  
Ah, there her utmost bound,  
With rocky ramparts crowned,  
Scarce I discern in hazy spray half-lost :  
Belerion’s\* shaggy brow that beetles o’er  
The Atlantic surges wide that vainly round him roar

No murmur of these storms shall reach  
The distant, solitary wretch,  
Who these fantastic rocks among  
Rambles and hears the sea-bird’s song ;  
Or listens to the fitful crash  
Of waves that ceaseless rise, and dash  
On adamant their watery might,  
Bursting in snowy sheets of light.

\* The Land’s End.

Their cool spray soothes my feverish brow  
Their voice is music to my soul:—  
Hoarse melody!—I list, and list,—  
And yield my sense to its control.  
It lulls my thoughts of grief,  
Till they appear a dream;  
And seems to bring relief,  
Although it does but seem.  
Wrapt in this converse with the voiceful sea,  
My wrongs, my woes, from memory fade and flee

They charged me to have erred,  
And others led astray,  
Adown the fatal path  
Of foul apostacy:  
False to my God, they me belied,  
And to my Lord who for me died.  
The conclave met, the judge was set,  
Man mounted on God's throne;  
And they did judge a matter there  
That rests with Him alone;  
A brother's faith they made a crime,  
And crushed thought's native right sublime.

Paternal Power! to Thee my soul  
Preferred her secret plea:  
Midst slanderous tongues my conscious breast  
Was justified with Thee.

For I, from nature's harmonies,  
Had caught the truth divine;  
And I, throughout the Spirit's page,  
Had marked its lustre shine.

*One Father God!* The voice was heard  
From Earth, and Sea, and Heaven:  
Nor could I quench that monishing,  
And hope to be forgiven.

Son of Man! The word of spite,  
Against Thee vent what malice might,  
Thou saidst, might pardon gain:  
I could not think, though I might err,  
Nor see, perchance, Thy glory clear,  
Thou wouldst to me be more severe,  
A soul to love Thee fain.

Man doomed me to vindictive fire  
Through ages without end :  
On earth in dungeons and exile  
My weary days to spend.  
That brings me to this ocean isle,  
Which lurking rocks defend.

I love thee Nature :—thou art kind  
Tuneful thy waters ;—soft thy wind :  
Earth for her children feels.  
Her rocks are adamant :—but they  
Shall sooner yield to pity's sway,  
Than stony hearts of bigots blind  
Which superstition steels.

Thus plained the pilgrim to the surge's roar,  
Then turned him homeward on the sea-beat shore.

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#### TO THE EDITOR OF THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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SIR,—At a Meeting of the Somerset and Dorset Unitarian Association, held at Bridport in April last, it was proposed that the Ministers connected with the Association should furnish an account of the rise and progress of their respective Congregations. One of these papers has been read at a recent Meeting of the Association. It was thought advisable that, to give these accounts a wider circulation they should be published in the pages of the "Gospel Advocate." In compliance with this suggestion, the following article has been forwarded for insertion in your periodical. It is intended as a preliminary article to the accounts of the several Congregations connected with the Association hereafter to be furnished. And it is presented to your readers, in the anticipation that it will tend to excite attention on a subject much neglected, and not less misrepresented, the *true* character of the early Dissenters; of those men to whom we are so much indebted, as the Pioneers of all subsequent progress that has been made in liberty of thought. Theirs, indeed, was the day of danger, theirs the encounter for liberty and conscience, and well did they acquit themselves in the contest. Let us shew ourselves not unworthy of such forefathers, by



rescuing their memory from that odium with which even the Puritan is frequently connected. In doing this we shall nothing extenuate, nor aught set down in malice, desiring as we do, merely to exhibit in their true light the character of a class of men, whose motives and views have been frequently too much maligned. We shall thus be enabled to transmit to posterity, examples of noble and distinguished sufferings for conscience' sake, whilst we ourselves are excited to emulation by reflecting on those virtues, which History, untarnished by prejudice, has handed to us for imitation.

Yours, &c.

PHILO.

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Though the more immediate object of the following articles, is to furnish the History of individual congregations or religious Societies, it will not, we trust, be deemed irrelevant to glance over the wider prospect which such a subject presents to our view, and briefly to advert to the religious history of the times in which these Societies had their origin. Public bodies are not generally the offspring of chance, are not often the result of circumstances merely local and temporary; but have their origin in causes more permanent, and more deeply influenced by the general opinions, the *spirit* of the periods in which they take their rise. The observation is peculiarly applicable to the origin of old Dissenting Societies. The history of early Dissent is connected with that of the most eventful periods in the annals of our country. For the dawn of religious liberty was contemporary with that of civil freedom. Nay more, it may in truth be asserted, that the twin offspring sprang from the same master-spirits. And in every subsequent period the features by which they have been characterized have denoted their original fraternity. The soil in which the two plants have been reared, is the same, and as the one has been nurtured in strength, so has the other been found to progress in vigour and beauty. Dissent had its origin in the spirit and circumstances of the times, in that common love of freedom which prompted men to defend their rights, civil and religious, against the aggressions of tyranny. It did not spring up at once; on the contrary, the structure of the edifice was the work of many years. The seeds of dissent were sown in the soil of early freedom,

and as that soil, (enriched by the blood of patriots and of martyrs,) by the successive labour of many years, became more cultivated, so like a young plant, Dissent rose, made gradual, though at first, silent progress; till at length, with its roots deeply fixed in the ground, we behold it rearing its majestic top, defying the assault of every opposing power, and subsequently becoming the *chief pillar* of England's liberties. These observations will justify us in this our attempt to unfold the motives and principles by which the early Dissenters were influenced in their opposition to the Church, and will at the same time give us a clear insight into the causes of many circumstances, to which, in the course of our history, it may be necessary to advert. The origin of Dissent may be traced to an early period of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. That Queen, though *professedly* an adherent of the Reformation, was attached to many of those rights by which the Romish Church was distinguished.\* A comparison of the ritual which she prescribed, with that of King Edward VI., would induce us to conclude, that instead of advancing the progress of the Reformation, she seemed desirous to bring the English to the Catholic Church. The more immediate cause, however, of that separation which called Dissent into existence, was the severity with which the use of certain habiliments, derived from the customs of the Catholic Church, and the observance of particular ceremonies, tending to foster former superstitions, were imposed upon the Clergy. They who first separated from the Establishment on these grounds, were supported by high authorities, among whom we may particularize Hooper, Bucer, and Peter Martyr. There had also been in the Church, men of high character for learning and morals, many of them during the persecution of the Protestants in the reign of Mary had been exiles from their native land on account of their religious opinions, and their adherence to the Protestant cause. For this reason, as well as for the intrinsic goodness of the cause which they espoused, the first Separatists from the Church of England were encouraged by the sympathy, nay, even obtained the countenance and support, of the most distinguished characters that adorn the annals of continental Protestantism. The separation to which we allude took place in the year

\* See Hume's History of England : Neal's History of Puritans, and Stype's Annals, p. 83; and Life of Parker, p. 107-8

1566, and in the year 1572 we find the Dissenting party consolidated by the formation of the Presbytery of Wandsworth, in Surry. Hitherto the differences between the Separatists and the Establishment had been confined to the ceremonies, the use of the Book of Common Prayer, &c., and to the question of the lawfulness of the supremacy of the Monarch in affairs connected with the discipline and government of the Church. But in the establishment of the Presbytery of Wandsworth we perceive Dissent assuming a *new feature*; another ground of objection to the Church by law established; the breach between the Dissenter and Churchman still further widened, by the introduction of a form of Church government which denies the authority of Episcopal jurisdiction, and annihilates the distinction between "the Bishop" and "the minister." Thus we learn, and the uniform experience of succeeding ages has inculcated the same great truth, that undue severity defeats its own ends, and that persecution so far from producing uniformity of opinion, by inflaming the passions of men only tends still more strongly to annihilate every tie by which the oppressed is bound to the oppressor. Had the Church in the present instance made the wearing of the habits, and the observance of the objectionable ceremonies, voluntary rather than compulsory, it is more than probable that the first Separatists would have remained in the Establishment, as neither did the Hierarchy of the Church, nor its union with the civil power, at the early period of Dissent to which we are alluding, constitute with the Separatists an objection to their connection with the Establishment. Once, however, excluded from the pale of the Church, men began to think with greater freedom on many of the tenets set forth in its articles. And as the necessary result of the uncontrolled exercise of thought is diversity of opinion, so the times to which our history relates, witnessed the rise of numerous sects, each distinguished by the advocacy of some peculiar tenet, or by the denial of doctrines held by other religious communities. Of these sects one at a later period became the rival of Presbyterianism, and constitutes in the present day one of the most influential Sections of the dissenting party; we allude to the Brownists, or as they were afterwards called, the Independents. Robert Brown, the head of the sect is described by Neal as "having been a preacher in the diocese of Norwich." Upon

his expulsion from the Church, he travelled through several counties of England preaching. After having undergone much suffering and persecution, he subsequently formed a congregation in Northamptonshire, on the principles since adopted by the Independents. The rise of this sect took place between the years 1582 and 1589. Thus, then, in the short space of twenty-five years, which had elapsed since the establishment of the episcopal church under Elizabeth, do we witness the rise of two powerful parties of dissenters, the Presbyterians and Independents, destined in a few years subsequent to the periods of which we are writing, to establish on the ruins of the Episcopal Church their own predominance in the land. "So fruitless is it," in the words of Hume, "for sovereigns to watch with a rigid care over orthodoxy, that the work perpetually renewed is perpetually to begin." To follow in detail the history of Dissent through the subsequent period of Elizabeth's reign, and the reigns of James and Charles, is compatible neither with the prescribed limits, nor subject, of this article. It would indeed be a tragic tale which we should have to unfold, and little pleasure could it afford to recall the dark scenes, or to exhibit the yet darker traits of human character, which mark this period. For that tale is one of tyranny inflicting every species of suffering which the ingenuity of malice could devise, of bigotry rendered yet more hateful by assuming the guise of zeal for religion, of unholy attempts to bind human thought by the trammels of human creeds, to prostrate reason before the shrine of despotism, to subject it to the caprice of tyrants. It speaks to us of humanity degraded, and of man's rights insulted and trampled upon. If so dark a picture possess any lighter shade to give it relief, it is to be found in the contemplation of those great minds who, unawed by the threats of power resisted every aggression on the liberty of that conscience which is accountable to God only, and in the heroic firmness of the suffering Puritans under every species of privation; a firmness which equals, if it do not exceed, all that has been recorded as noble and great in the annals of universal history. Passing over, then, a detail of the history of Dissent, we shall comprise our remarks on the subject under general observations, which will exhibit the Puritans in their true character, and serve to give us an insight into the principles and motives by which they were actuated. The discussion of these particulars will form the subject of a future article.



## CHRISTIAN BELIEF OF RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY.\*

SINCE we gave our brief account of this great man, we have had the advantage and gratification of perusing Mr. Aspland's, Mr. Fox's, and Dr. Carpenter's, Sermons, on occasion of his death, with their respective Appendices. They are all, as might be expected, able productions; but Dr. Carpenter has favoured the public with some particularly interesting and valuable information, respecting the life, character, and opinions of the late Rajah. There is one part of his book, which we feel ourselves especially bound to submit to the attention of our readers. Towards the end of our short sketch of the Hindoo Reformer, (in the "Gospel Advocate" for November) we hinted our doubts whether "he had ever professedly examined the question respecting the *supernatural* origin, the *miraculous* introduction and establishment, of Christianity." Our doubts were derived from his own writings, and we believe we were by no means singular in entertaining them. But it seems to us now, that all such doubts ought to be entirely abandoned. The testimony produced by Dr. Carpenter is decisive. It appears that, whilst the Rajah was at Bristol, he was induced to enter into the freest conversation on religious subjects with some of the most eminent divines, and literary men of that neighbourhood. Among these were the Rev. John Foster, the well known Author of the admirable "Essays on Decision of Character," &c; and Dr. Jerrard, the Head of the Bristol College. To each of these gentlemen Dr. Carpenter addressed a letter, after the death of Rammohun Roy, "soliciting their opinion as to the correctness of the following position—that the Rajah's declarations authorized the conviction that he believed in the divine authority of Christ, though he rested this belief on internal evidence; and that he believed in the resurrection of Christ."

The following are extracts from Mr. Foster's reply.—

"To the Rev. Dr. Carpenter.

"Dear Sir,

"Stapleton, October 14."

"My memory is so very defective that I have no doubt your own, and that of each of the gentlemen of the party at Stapleton Grove, will have more faithfully retained many particulars of the conversation with that most interesting person, Rajah Ram-mohun-roy. I cannot

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\* "A Review of the Labours, Opinions, and Character of Rajah Ram-mohun Roy," By Lant Carpenter, L. L. D. London: Hunter, St. Paul's Churchyard.



recollect whether, in replying, with promptitude and the utmost apparent frankness, to the respectful inquiries concerning his religious opinions, he expressed in so many exact words his 'belief in the divine authority of Christ.' But it was virtually such a declaration when he avowed, as he unequivocally did, his belief in the resurrection of Christ, and in the christian miracles generally. At the same time he said that the *internal* evidence of christianity had been the most decisive of his conviction. And he gave his opinion, with some reasons for it, that the miracles are not the part of the christian evidence the best adapted to the conviction of sceptics.

"This led one of the gentlemen to observe, that surely the sceptics must admit, that if the miracles recorded were real facts, they must be irrefragable proof of the truth of what they were wrought to attest; and that in so serious an affair the sceptics are under a solemn obligation to examine faithfully the evidence that they were actually wrought, which if they did, they would find that evidence decisive.

"The Rajah instantly assented to this; but I thought I perceived by his manner that he had a slight surmise that the observation might possibly be meant to bear on *himself*, with some implication of a doubt, in consequence of what he had said of the inferior efficacy of the proof from miracles, whether *he* had an *entire* conviction of the reality of those recorded miracles; for he said, very pointedly, that any argument on that subject was quite superfluous as to *him*, for that he did believe in their reality."

Dr. Jerrard's reply was comprised in these words:—

"1. The Rajah Rammohun Roy expressed his belief in the Divine authority of Jesus Christ, as an inspired teacher of righteousness, and an accredited messenger from God.

"2. He explicitly declared that he believed in the miracles of Christ generally, and particularly in his resurrection, which he said was the foundation of the Christian faith, and the great fact on which he rested his own hopes of a resurrection."

## TO SUBSCRIBERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

[We have received communications from 'A Friend to the Liberty of the Gospel;' from R. (Tavistock); from J. W.; from 'Inquirer'; and from G. T. The Article 'On Creeds' will appear in our next.

We have learnt from several quarters, that expectations are entertained of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE being immediately dropped. We beg to assure our Subscribers and Friends, that at present no such step is in contemplation by its conductors. We see reason to fear that the motives and circumstances which led to the commencement of this work, have never been well understood at a distance; and it is impossible for us fully to explain them here. Let it suffice to say, that there is no individual who has the slightest personal interest in its continuance for a single moment longer than it shall appear to be useful. The sale has been steadily increasing for several months; and at present it is our full intention to proceed.]

THE  
GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

No. VIII.]

FEBRUARY, 1834.

[Vol. I.]

LADY HEWLEY'S FUND,—VICE-CHANCELLOR'S  
SPEECH AND DECISION.

WE know not, whether the decision of the Vice-Chancellor against Lady Hewley's Trustees, or the speech with which he was pleased to accompany his decision, should be considered the most extraordinary. We are well satisfied, however, that neither ought ever to have been made; and we shall proceed to state our grounds for this opinion.

The decision itself, if we can suppose it to be final, is doubtless of considerable importance to several small Unitarian congregations in the north of England, and to the Academical Institution at York. The most erroneous notions seem to be abroad, however, concerning the amount of benefit which Unitarians derive from the charity. Though the majority of the Trustees have long been of this persuasion, we believe that full two thirds of the annual income, (about £3000.) have always been given to orthodox societies. But if we mistake not, the decision is of far more importance to the public, than to Unitarians. It appears to establish a principle, in reference to funds of this kind, the application of which cannot in justice and decency be allowed to rest here.

Lady Sarah Hewley, the wife of Sir John Hewley, an English Presbyterian Dissenter, by deed of law dated 1704, left estates in Yorkshire to Trustees, for various charitable and religious purposes. First "for providing relief for poor and godly preachers of Christ's holy gospel;" secondly, for the sustenance of the widows of poor and godly persons; thirdly, for the encouragement of preaching the holy gospel; and fourthly, for relieving such godly persons, residing in Yorkshire, as the Trustees might think fit objects of the charity. Lady Hewley and her husband were members of the congregation at Saint Saviour's-gate Chapel, of which Mr. Wellbeloved is now the minister. It was then, as it still is, a Presbyterian

congregation. It is well known to have been a characteristic of this body of Dissenters in England, at the period of this bequest, not to use any particular creeds or symbols of faith, but to regard the Holy Scriptures as the sole test of divine truth. There is every reason to suppose that the testatrix in this case cherished this principle; for the deeds contain no reference to any specific creed or articles of faith, but only, in general terms, to the "holy gospel." That she was herself a believer in all the principal doctrines of the Trinitarian system, we presume there are no just grounds to doubt. There were few persons, indeed, in those times who were not believers in this system. But there is not the least appearance, in any of Lady Hewley's words and acts, of her having been a zealot on these points, or of her having had them at all in view in making her bequests. She seems to have been a worthy and pious Christian lady, embracing the common religious views of the times, and wishing to leave a portion of her worldly substance for religious and charitable ends, chiefly in connection with the denomination to which she belonged. It has so happened, however, during the hundred and thirty years which have elapsed since the date of the trust-deed, that most of the churches in England belonging to that denomination, have gradually departed from what are commonly held to be orthodox views, and have become Unitarian;—and this has been in consequence of that very freedom from the shackles of creeds, and that adherence to the principle of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, which Lady Hewley seems to have revered. But because of this change of sentiment in the majority of Presbyterian congregations, and because the trust has been latterly managed by persons of the Unitarian faith, a Chancery suit has been instituted, and thus far successfully conducted, to deprive the Trustees of their power, and to confine the application of the funds exclusively to Trinitarian recipients. It is not attempted to deny the liberality of the Trustees, in having distributed the greater portion of the funds to the orthodox societies. But they themselves are Unitarians, and therefore unfit to continue in this trust. They have given £80. a year to Mr. Wellbeloved, the minister of the congregation to which Lady Hewley belonged;—they have granted exhibitions to York College, of which Mr. Wellbeloved is the head, and which is

intended for the supply of an educated ministry to the churches of that very class, (nominally Presbyterian), of which Lady Hewley was a member; they have given assistance to indigent ministers of those churches, now professing Unitarian sentiments;—and, to crown their delinquency, they have placed some poor Unitarians in the alms-houses established under the charity. For these sins they are to be visited with deprivation of their trust and authority. So have prayed the relators in this case, who are Calvinists of the Independent denomination;—and so has decided Sir Launcelot Shadwell, Vice-Chancellor of England, who is doubtless a very profound and upright judge, but who, as we hope to show presently, is an exceedingly shallow Biblical critic.

We believe the idea of this prosecution originated with some sagacious orthodox attorney, in the north of England. He doubtless foresaw the profits, and is beginning to reap a good harvest. The principal party in the undertaking appears to be the notable Mr. Thomas Wilson, of London, a gentleman whose abundant wealth, it must be confessed, is equally ready to be poured forth, whether it be an object of Christian benevolence, or of paltry sectarian jealousy, which is to be attained. We shall not trust ourselves, to speak as we feel of the character and motives of this proceeding. In their own hearts, if ever they should be awakened to a sense of true Christian liberality, the chief movers in the enterprise will find their recompense.

The decision was given against the Trustees, on the sole ground that, as being Unitarians, they cannot be such persons as the testatrix would have considered professors of "Christ's holy gospel." This is to our minds clearly a *non sequitur*. The conclusion of his Honour is extremely hasty and doubtful. That Lady Hewley herself embraced, or rather had not abandoned, the reputed orthodox views of the nature of Christ, we have no inclination to dispute. But it does by no means follow from this, that she would have excluded Unitarians from among the professors of "Christ's holy gospel." All Trinitarians of the present day do not deny our right to the Christian name; and why should it be assumed that Lady Hewley would have done so? Such may be the

narrowness of his Honour's views; but Lady Hewley might have said, with the late Bishop Watson, and many other enlightened Trinitarians, "for my part I am of a different opinion." That she would not have *selected* Unitarians, as the especial objects of her bounty, may be readily granted. No one pretends that she would; nor have the funds ever been distributed by the Trustees on this principle. But neither did she select Trinitarians, or indeed say anything about the profession of any particular dogmas. She left her bounty, in the most general way, for teachers and professors of Christ's holy gospel; and though herself, probably, a believer in Christ's proper deity, she might not consider *that* as an essential, nor even as a very important article of her belief, nor mean to exclude from the pale of the Christian Church all who reject that doctrine. Such have been the avowed sentiments of many sincere Trinitarians: they may have been Lady Hewley's. The Vice-Chancellor is mistaken, if he supposes that pious people, in their solemn acts of charity, are always guided entirely by their own peculiar views of Christian doctrine. We assure him that they do sometimes put aside these views, and suffer themselves to be guided, in the distribution of their bounty, by the most enlarged and liberal affections of Christian brotherhood. Such may have been the character of the pious and charitable Lady Hewley,—although the Vice-Chancellor has attempted to sully her memory with the imputation of narrow and sectarian feelings. His Honour was pleased to observe, in the opening of his speech, that the question was not "whether Unitarians could be considered Christians or not?" Begging his pardon, we must contend that, if any theological question was to be at all touched upon, that was precisely the question for an equitable judge to entertain in the case. Lady Hewley having bequeathed her bounty, not to Trinitarians or Unitarians, but, in general terms, to the professors of Christ's holy gospel,—the fair question surely was, whether Unitarians, amongst others,—not exclusively, but amongst others,—can be reckoned "professors of Christ's holy gospel," in other words, Christians. If they can be so reckoned, it should seem that they have at least an equal claim with any other persons to the benefits of this charity, as being, in most instances, the direct descendants and successors of



those Christian people to whose class Lady Hewley belonged. That she herself believed in the deity of Christ, and in the doctrine of original sin, (granting that his Honour is correct in this supposition,) affords no proof that she meant to confine her bounty strictly to persons holding the same views. The words of the trust-deed are surely a much safer, and we should have thought, a far more legal guide, to the wishes of the testatrix, than any strained inferences of this kind. But the words of the deed are general. We do maintain, therefore, on these grounds, that the decision of the Vice-Chancellor is in all reason and justice a rash one. It surely will not be allowed to stand?

There is, however, another view of the subject, which, as we have said, is of still greater importance to the public, than to Unitarians. Is it henceforth to be understood to be a principle of English law, or equity, that the pious and charitable bequests of persons who have been dead hundreds of years, can be enjoyed by those alone, who adhere strictly to the same theological sentiments as the testators held? If this principle *must* be recognized, let it be:—but in common fairness, let not its application rest here. What rare confusion will it make with half the religious charities and emoluments in the kingdom! What scenes of theological contention must our courts of law become! It is to be hoped that Barristers will make haste and diligently pursue their new studies, that they may acquit themselves more creditably than the Vice-Chancellor has done. If this principle is to be admitted, however, it will certainly give the moving parties in this suit no peculiar claims to Lady Hewley's bounty. She never belonged to their sect. There is no more reason to suppose that she meant to leave her gifts to Trinitarians to the exclusion of Unitarians, than that she meant to leave them to Presbyterians to the exclusion of Independents.

But there is a more important consideration suggested. Is it for the interests of truth, is it for the good of Society, that individuals should thus be allowed to *bribe the most distant generations* to the profession of a particular set of theological opinions? According to this principle, if we understand it rightly, it evidently may come to pass, in the lapse of centuries, that opinions which every sensible and honest man in existence utterly repudiates, opinions

which society at large has long abandoned as false and pernicious, will yet continue to be supported and taught, only because there is a large sum of money which nobody must touch, except on condition that they *will* support and teach these obsolete opinions. We say not that this is the case in the present instance. But we say that the principle is worth nothing, unless it can be carried out to its legitimate consequences ; and that its legitimate consequences are such as we have stated. If this be the acknowledged principle of English law and justice, we must think that the famous statute of *mortmain* is very imperfect in its enactments ; and that there ought to be immediately added to it, some provisions calculated to prevent this unholy alliance between Error and Mammon to the end of the world.

We have left ourselves less space than we designed for observations on the Vice-Chancellor's speech in this case. It is a curiosity in its way. All our readers may not be aware, that Sir Launcelot Shadwell was in his youth a *crack* man at the University. He seems to have determined, on this occasion, to shew that the studies and labours of his professional life have not obliterated the knowledge of Greek from his memory. In order to prove that Unitarian ministers, and Mr. Wellbeloved in particular, are not "godly preachers of Christ's holy gospel," his Honour was pleased to argue thus. There is a certain Society, called the Unitarian Association, of which Mr. Wellbeloved is a member. This Society distributes a book entitled "An Improved Version of the New Testament." This the Vice-Chancellor thinks is such a book as no godly Christian could put forth or sanction ; and forthwith he plunges into the most erudite criticisms upon certain passages in this Version. Unfortunate Improved Version ! It has been more frequently the object of orthodox assault, than all the other works and deeds of Unitarians put together. To reprobate the imperfections and doubtful alterations of this Version, has always been the favourite method, because it is one of the easiest and most popular methods, of exciting vulgar horror against us. We are assuredly no very warm admirers of the said Version. We are humbly of opinion, that its principal Editor, though one of the most powerful and lucid reasoners that ever took pen in hand, was not highly gifted as a Scriptural

critic. In any case, to hold individuals of our body answerable for the real or supposed defects of that Version, is altogether unjust. In the case of Mr. Wellbeloved, who was the principal defendant in this suit, and against whom his Honour's observations were chiefly directed, such a mode of proceeding was supremely absurd; inasmuch as Mr. Wellbeloved has often appeared before the world in the character of a Scriptural translator and critic, and should have been judged by his own works. He has translated and commented on a considerable portion of the Old Testament. Either in published Sermons, or in controversial writings, he has given his own criticisms on most of the texts appealed to in the Trinitarian controversy. Why did not the Vice-Chancellor examine and confute these? Ah! we should have desired no better entertainment, than to see his Honour fairly pitted, on these questions, with one of the most learned and accomplished Biblical scholars in England. Did the Archdeacon of Cleveland give him a timely hint to beware? Or did his noble friend, the Lord Chancellor, warn him not to meddle with a man, "who would be an ornament to any sect, and who, though entirely in the wrong, had utterly confounded a learned dignitary of the church, though entirely in the right?"—

The Vice-Chancellor opens the Improved Version at the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Admirable instinct, that led him at once, "off hand" as it were, to one of the most difficult parts of one of the most difficult books of the New Testament! He was sure to meet with something there on which to exercise his ingenuity. "It began thus," said his Honour, "God who, in several parts, and in several manners, formerly spake to our fathers by the Prophets." Now he did not mean to say that they had not translated the word in the original properly as 'God,'—our translation being, 'God who at sundry times.'" Excellent candour, so far! But πολυμερῶς "might signify so many parts of time, or so many parts of space." Wonderful learning this! But if such be the meaning of the word, we should have thought it could not be very wrong in the Editors of the Version, to translate it "in several parts." "It shews," said the Vice-Chancellor, "that these translators meant to aim at extreme accuracy."

We are convinced that the translator was actuated by no such intention; but simply thought it would be best to render the word in the most general sense, in this place, in order to leave readers to form their own views of the sacred writer's meaning, on which, whether his Honour happens to be aware of the fact or not, different opinions have been expressed. The next observation is, that the translators have rendered *δι' ου* "for whom," in the second verse,—"for whom also he constituted the ages." The Vice-Chancellor admits, with his usual candour, that "feeling themselves hard pushed, they have recourse to a note, by which it appears that two or three persons had fancied that might be the proper translation." Who does the reader suppose these "two or three persons" may be? Why, amongst others, the learned Grotius, and the learned Schleusner, author of the best Lexicon of the Greek Testament! Now, we are not inclined to defend the translation. In our humble judgment, though it *may* be right, it is, all things considered, not warrantable. But for the Vice-Chancellor to hold up Unitarians to obloquy, as persons not worthy to be considered professors of Christ's holy gospel, because some individual amongst them had approved a translation suggested by such men as Grotius and Schleusner, was an act of the most egregious——but we are checked by our respect for the dignity of the judicial bench! The next mentioned sin of these improving translators, is, that they have rendered the word *υποστασις* "perfections," in the third verse,—“an image of his perfections.” It means “perfections” quite as truly as it means “person,” which is the common translation. Literally, perhaps, it does not mean either. It appears to signify, “substance,” or “essence.” What is the essence, or the real nature and character of God, as far as it can be represented to men's minds by an image, if it be not his perfections? We fear our readers may think there is enough of this, and that we are travelling as much out of the way as did the Vice-Chancellor. We will trouble them with only one other instance of this University man's learning. He objects that the translator has rendered the word *γεννηκα* “adopted,” in the fifth verse,—“Thou art my Son, this day have I adopted thee.” He says, “there was not the slightest pretence to translate the word “I have adopted.” We really think there was not

much reason for it, and that it would have been better rendered "I have begotten," which is its proper, literal meaning. But what great harm is there in the rendering of the Improved Version? Oh! "it is plain on the face of it that they meant to establish a doctrine that our Saviour was not begotten, in that sense in which the term is taken by the Church of England, and the orthodox Dissenters, as they are called." We apprehend that this is sheer ignorance on the part of his Honour. We do not believe that the "orthodox Dissenters, as they are called," do entertain, or care the least about, the Athanasian dogma of the Church of England, that the Son is eternally begotten of the Father. If the Vice-Chancellor think that this faith is necessary to all who may participate of Lady Hewley's fund, we conceive that the Independents are quite as much disqualified as the Unitarians.

We cannot conclude without remarking, that, for any thing contained in the Vice-Chancellor's speech, his assertion that "nothing could be more arbitrary, more fanciful, more silly, or more false, than this Improved Version," was as gratuitous, as shallow, as flippant, and as dictatorial a piece of learned pomposity, as ever proceeded from the lips of man.

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## THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE.\*

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THE whole benefit derivable from the review of the Past, must be shown in the renewed energy which it gives to the good intentions of the Present. "Days may speak, and multitude of years may teach wisdom;" but they speak to the wind, and teach wisdom to the waters, if the efficacy of their words and teachings be not seen in the refinement of the character and the melioration of the life. "Wisdom is justified by her children." If the grief with which we look *back* upon our many lapses and negligences, or *within* upon our numerous deficiencies and imperfections, be, however pure and genuine for the time, as a wreath of mist that disperses in the breeze, as a flake of snow that

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\* This paper comprises the substance of an article which was intended for the commencement of the New Year, but which reached us too late for insertion in the January number. Our respected correspondent will perceive that we have, on this account, taken the liberty to abridge his communication, and to give it another form and title. ED.



melts as soon as it touches the ground, whatever has been felt has been felt in vain, and for all the practical purposes of our being might quite as well have been not felt at all. Such sentimental regret never yet made a human being wiser or better than it found him. If the summer breeze be not permanently sweeter for the odour of the rose that has passed away—if the evening waters retain no traces of the music that has floated along them and expired—as little can it be expected, and as little will it be found, that the heart or the life is ever rendered better by regrets that start into the same momentary existence, and pass with the same unstaying fleetness away. They “come like shadows, and as shadows they depart,” without leaving a trace of their presence or departure. The test, by which these impressions are to be tried, is in every man’s power, and can never deceive him. When a new portion of the past lies distinctly and vividly behind him, and he can compare it deliberately with the similar portions which preceded it, let him ask himself whether he is conscious of a superior power of pursuing good or resisting evil ; whether he has learnt to love himself less, or to love his fellow creatures and his Maker more ; whether sorrow has made him more resigned, and happiness more grateful ; whether he has “put from him the sandals” of worldly feeling, and stood upon “holy ground” as on ground that he *felt* to be holy. If he is not able to answer these self-inquiries to his satisfaction, let him not think that the regret, with which he makes this secret acknowledgment is to be confounded with, or substituted for, the repentance that leads to the remission of sins. On the contrary, let him remember that such inefficient regrets will rather increase the evil than diminish it, by adding self-delusion to all that he already deplures. Undeterred, though not uninstructed, by the recollection of former good resolutions made and broken, let him enter upon a new period with a “new and contrite heart,” and awaken his slumbering soul to the “visitings of the day-spring from on high.” The Past is indeed beyond his power ; but it is *not* beyond his power to avoid a repetition of its errors. His heart may yet leap awake to the voice of the spirit within it, and of “the oracles of God.” In penitence and in prayer, in humiliation and devotion, the stranger of the world and the pilgrim of the sky may commence a new period of the life, which is to make him

meet for immortality; and more, far more likely is he, to persevere in the good resolutions which are thus founded upon a humble consciousness of his own inferiority, than if they had been formed in that "haughty spirit," which so often "goeth before a fall." The rain prepares the way for the beauty of the after sunshine, and the faith of sorrow, like the pearl which is found in the deep waters, is of greater value and of finer consistency than the nautilus which only floats on the surface of joy.

As to the Future, how many are the stages and events, for which the discipline of the Past and the Present is to prepare us! In the first place it has to prepare us for a possibly premature departure. There is a period, to which human life is permitted to extend, and to which human hope *will* permit itself to look forward, the shortening of which, even by a few years, appears to us to be an abridgement of the term of life, which was beyond our calculations. It is not, however, beyond the calculations which we may and ought to make for ourselves, who cannot foresee the future; but, when we see that the leaf does not fade in the autumn more frequently than the flower decays in the spring, we ought to lay the warning lesson to our hearts, and to remember that we too may be in the number of those whose days are cut short before the term of the Psalmist, and on whom the darkness of night may come down at once, unannounced by the gradual and prophetic shadows of the evening. These are things which should warn us to be "up and doing," since we know not how soon the torch of life may be crushed out, and "our years be spent as a tale that is told," however its *moral* may have been learned or neglected.

The next of the Future possibilities, for which the Past and the Present are to prepare us, is that of a protracted old age. If we escape what we denominate a premature departure, "the years must draw nigh, when we shall say we have no pleasure in them," if we have not acquired for "the hoary head" the respect which is due to long-trying virtue, and the peace which can only *then* be obtained by the review of a life, neither worthless nor useless; and by the possession of hopes which have shone, like the moon by day, purely and distinctly even amid the brightness of the sunshine, but which come forth, like the same moon, with

a fairer and less earthly radiance, as the sun declines and the shadows fall.

Our use of the Past and the Present should prepare us for the hour, when the Giver of life shall take it away. Come when it may, that hour must come to all; nor can it be "far from every one of us," since, though we know not when, where, or how the thread will be divided, we know the utmost length of which it is permitted to be woven. "One event happeneth unto all;" and even the Son of God himself was not suffered to dash from his lips the last bitter draught of a mortal's pain. Of the bitterness of such an hour, there can be no alleviation, if it be not found in the recollections of the earthly Past and the hopes of the heavenly Future. Nothing but virtue can give peace, nothing but religion can give pleasantness to death. All else will then be "vanity and vexation of spirit;" and if, as the shooting stars of pride and passion pass away, clouds, and not stars, become visible where they have departed, "the light which is in us will itself be darkness," and who shall say how great that darkness will be? Another object of preparation remains to be noticed, though in doing so we may seem to be dividing the indivisible. Our use or abuse of passing time, must fit or unfit us for the blessedness of heaven. An evil spirit could not be happy, though "the trees of God" were waving over his head, and the "waters of life" were pouring their immortal murmurs on his ear. The mind may make the happiness which it does not find, but it will never find the happiness which it cannot *make*. Rest would be no rest to those who have none within them; and a mere earthly nature, with all its earth about it, would find no home among all the paradises of God. It is in proportion as we assimilate ourselves to the loftier nature which we can imagine, and of which we find so divine an example in the history of Him "whom we call Master and Lord," that we shall be fitted for the enjoyment of that which cannot otherwise be joy,—for the perfection of that, which cannot otherwise be "made perfect." All other preparations are absorbed in this, as the rivers in the ocean, or the planet rays in the sun. Our business on earth is to prepare for heaven. This is the highest point of human duty—the snow on the Alps, the corner-stone of the pyramid, the eagle's nest in the cedar.

ON CREEDS.

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MEN of the same religious views have always been strongly attracted towards each other. They have united themselves into societies for religious instruction, edification and comfort. To men "whose faith, whose hopes are one," this union has been strength and happiness. It has been the spring of activity, and the soul has been moved to exalted deeds by its impulses. The united have sought a symbol of their union—and formed a creed. They have agreed upon certain tenets or principles as a statement of their belief; these they have subscribed, and to these they have referred others, who desired information. If by this statement of opinions—this creed,—they intended nothing more than an expression of their own deep persuasion of religious truth, if it were drawn up with that modesty and charity which should distinguish such a document, and submitted to their brethren in a candid spirit, and unaccompanied by other authority than that which its intrinsic value and its accordance with eternal truth threw around it, there could be little objection to the framing and publication of it. It was the point towards which the sympathies of those who subscribed it converged like radii from the circumference to the centre. It was the elevation of a symbol revered by all—the peculiar feature of their communion: and they might justly and consistently congratulate each other that they had been able to comprise in one document the leading ideas of the whole body on so grand and momentous a subject as religion. But if they advanced beyond this safe and just limit, and attached to their creed an importance which truth could not invest it with, and put it forth to others with a confidence and arrogance ill-becoming those who are ever liable to error; if they were unwilling to admit that any other set of opinions than their own could possibly be true, and even pronounced the opinions of others false in themselves and contrary to all known truths, because the features were not the same with their own; if they presumed to hurl ecclesiastical censures and anathemas against all who differed from them, or with a mixture of pitiful weakness and blind presumption, dared to assign them a miserable fate, as a punishment of their unbelief, in another world;

or, further still, to call upon the civil power to put them down, and arm it with a licence to imprison, to torture, to destroy—they exceeded their duty, violated the natural rights of others, and in as far as they proceeded towards this climax of intolerance, bigotry and cruelty, rendered the fact more glaring and offensive, that truth was in their view, nothing—their own opinion—every thing.

To say that such professed advocates for truth were in the wrong and unwisely zealous, is to speak too mildly. They were not more misguided than wicked. There was not more indiscretion in their zeal, than there was cruelty in their conduct. We might have pitied and perhaps pardoned them, had they talked and blustered only in their ignorance of the operations of the human mind, and its natural freedom of thought; had they been content to utter threats and menaces for wise men to laugh at and the winds to bear away; but when they resorted to force, brute force, they were no longer objects of pity or contempt, but of indignation. They stood forward in the loathsome garb of uncharitableness, inhumanity and impiety—their proceedings an outrage of all order, right and liberty, and their names justly uttered with execration and heard with loathing.

Look at the origin of Creeds, and the manner in which they have been forced upon the world, and we shall not be charged with inventing a mere hypothesis. The first Christian converts associated with themselves all who named the name of Jesus. Ancient distinctions were laid aside for this one distinction—a disciple of Jesus; and the earliest in the moral vineyard sought no more than the avowal of such a connexion from those who followed them. But the form was too simple and the state of things in the Church too natural for the *wise*, and the *disputer of this world*. The Creed of the founders of Christianity, if their simple profession of faith is not dishonoured by a term which is associated with intolerance and rampant bigotry, was not subtle and recondite enough for succeeding generations and philosophers of a mystic school; and hence they aimed (gratuitous labour!) to improve upon it, and to make it a master-key to the Christian system. The consequences might have been foreseen. Parties multiplied in proportion to the attempts made to establish a standard of Christian doctrine separate from the sacred depository



of it ; and with the multiplication of parties such attempts were redoubled, till " confusion was worse confounded." There were rival bishops, rival parties, and rival councils. The assertions and decisions of one day were contradicted and set aside the next. By turns the same doctrines were *divine truth* and *damnable heresy*. To an intelligent unbeliever the situation of the Church of Christ at such a period must have presented an extraordinary appearance. He must have laughed in scorn, or wept in pity, at the misguided zeal which shook the kingdom of Jesus to its centre—at the confusion and discord which prevailed in a kingdom professedly of order and peace ; and asked himself in sober sadness, ' What were the blessings of religion in such a form ?'

To the folly of polemical warfare succeeded the guilt of it ; and never can we recur, but with feelings of honest indignation, to the atrocities perpetrated by infuriate zeal with the insolent mockery of glorifying God. Crusade against the infidel was but a single form in which this zeal displayed its hideous nature. It was a crusade against natural law, reason, right. It was a crusade against every feeling of humanity, and every law of Christian benevolence. It outraged equally humanity and religion, and trod them under foot. The choice lay between the creed and the sword—a choice afterwards enforced by Mohammed, belief or extermination. Oh what madness tyrannized over the mind ! And this persecuting spirit, and fiery zeal for the honor of God, were the more intolerable, because they were shewn by men of the most corrupt minds, by men whose ambition and profligacy were proverbial, and who dared to go all lengths rather than fail in the accomplishment of their purposes. If unenlightened and rash zeal for religion is disgusting at any time, it is more than all things disgusting in its exhibitions by him who is no sincere disciple of religion nor governed by its dictates. Nor, even though it rage in his bosom and excite his frantic efforts, can it be received as a substitute for moral worth.

To such excesses, over which the veil may now be drawn, we need not allude in proof of the inutility of forming a creed for general adoption, and the injustice of forcing it upon any. To an exposition of the sentiments of a church or party, we have already said there can be no objection ;—it would be well if that exposition were

scriptural,—but the moment it is put forward with undue authority, and prescribed to others, that moment evil is brought into the Church of Christ, and the right of private judgment infringed. To what uninspired man has God delegated the authority of directing the faith of his brethren? And if not to a single individual, certainly not to bodies of men; for, however they may agree among themselves, touching the points of Christian faith, their most cordial agreement cannot be taken as a test of truth, nor suffered to bind the sentiments and the conscience of another. This is an interference which the spirit of Christianity and every precept also expressly condemns. Why cannot men allow to each other that liberty which the Creator has bestowed equally upon all; and be content to exercise and enjoy their own freedom, nor presume to intermeddle in things so sacred as the accountability of each man for his sentiments and conduct to God alone!

There is one creed to which we can never turn, even in thought, without feeling surprize that it has not sunk into oblivion, like the dark ages which gave it being—the Athanasian. This was the creed of the church when the cries of the persecuted rose in a mighty volume to Heaven, and the earth shuddered as it drank their blood. That a church professing to have cast off the errors of its parent, should have retained such an instrument of bigotry and intolerance, is matter of wonder and regret. Associated with scenes of blood and horror, it could have had few charms in the eyes of the Reformers; but it is full of the harsh, uncharitable, and vindictive spirit displayed in the ancient church, sweeping, with a ruthless hand, all who cannot receive its contradictory and incomprehensible dogmas, into the furnace of everlasting misery. In its origin, its domination, and its spirit, it is a stain upon a church professing itself tolerant, and deriving its origin from free inquiry. It is still the viper in its bosom, though public opinion has neutralized the poison of its fangs.

If we understand Christianity it is a religion eminently free. It exercises no tyranny over the human mind. It requires no blind submission to its dictates. That which it does not itself it can never sanction. It does not licence the attempts of bigotry to restrain the exercise of the understanding. It delegates no power to men to erect a standard of faith—the golden calf of their own vanity and

presumption,—and to compel others to fall down and worship it. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. This is the candid and considerate precept of our holy religion. Would to God that men would honor it with their lips and in their hearts! The spirit of this religion is anti-sectarian; for it combines the human race in one universal bond, equally dispensing its privileges and blessings, inspiring its lovely hopes, assembling all in the presence of the Universal Parent, and reconciling opposite interests and views, and cementing kindred feelings by the soft influences of brotherly love. Shall it ever have its free course and be glorified on earth? If it be a dream of the imagination, it is a beautiful dream, in which we behold the Christian world under the influence of religious harmony. What a generous spirit warms and animates the breasts of men! How considerate are they to the doubts and scruples of each other! They possess freedom, and they mutually grant it. If there be not a full harmony of opinion there is a harmony of sentiment, which sounds as sweet as the harp of Æolus. If there be any rivalry, it is the rivalry of affection and kindred duties. All are one in spirit and temper, all one in Christ, and reflecting honor and glory upon him by the exhibition of those lovely qualities of the mind and heart which shone in him conspicuously—the reflected rays of his own illustrious virtue. It is a scene to warm the frozen feelings of indifference, and to humanize intolerance. It is a scene on which God himself would condescend to smile. Alas! that it is only a dream.

In connexion with these remarks, we hope we shall appropriately introduce one of the few creeds of human invention, to which little objection can be made. Its author, Wm Livingston, was a gentleman of Scottish extraction, one of the founders of American independence, and the friend of Washington. He inserted the creed in his own publication, “*The Independent Reflector*;”—the following passages are an abstract. They breathe a fine spirit of independence, whilst they profess a sacred regard for the revelations of God; and the sarcasm against the abuse of religious institutions is not the less cutting because it is calmly expressed.

“It is well known that some have represented me to be an Atheist, others a Deist, and a third sort as a Presbyter-

rian. My creed will shew that none have exactly hit it.

“I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments without any foreign comments or human explanation but my own ; for this I should doubtless be honoured with martyrdom, did I not live in a government which restrains that fiery zeal which would reduce a man’s body to ashes for the illumination of his understanding.

“I believe that the word *orthodox* is a hard, equivocal, priestly word, that has caused the effusion of more blood than all the Roman Emperors put together.

“I believe that to defend the Christian religion is one thing, and to knock a man on the head for being of a different opinion is another thing.

“I believe that he who feareth God and worketh righteousness will be accepted of him, even though he refuse to worship any man or order of men into the bargain.

“I believe that a man may be a good Christian though he be of no sect in Christendom.”

Such a spirited creed as this, in self defence too, may be tolerated. For the warmth with which we have spoken of others we hope to find an excuse in the bosoms of our readers. Nor can we avoid repeating the deep conviction we entertain of the mischiefs entailed upon religion, by the substitution of human creeds for the word of God, and the forcible establishment of them. If their dogmas are glaringly at variance with each other, and minds of a lighter vein are disposed to ridicule them, they are a source of sorrow and mortification to the reflecting and pious. If their anathemas are impotent, they are anti-christian, and a foul abomination. Indeed, try to discover something that shall be the chief of evils to religion, and the darkest stain upon its character, and that something shall be a Creed, the offspring of bigotry, and ally of cruelty. It shall be as the apple of discord to madden men against each other, to cause animosity to tear asunder the tenderest and loveliest ties of feeling, and rapine and bloodshed to pollute the richest provinces of humanity.

W.

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## A TALE.

Behold wise men came to Jerusalem, saying "We have seen *his* star in the East."

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THE lamp of the Philosopher burnt dim at the midnight hour;—but still he bent without weariness over the subject of his studies. His head leant on one hand, and the pale gleaming light shone on a brow wrinkled with deep thought. At times his eye wandered around the room, but it rested not on any external object; the mind was too busy within to mark any signs of an outward world. At length the door of the chamber opened, and a young maiden stood before him, soliciting his attention by the name of "Father." The Philosopher turned his head, for the sound had reached his ear, but the suppliant's upward, earnest look, was met by a vacant gaze, for as yet the word had no meaning in his pre-occupied mind. At length the power of recognition came, and with it an air of surprize, as he said "Daughter! here at this hour?" "Father," replied the maiden, "I come to entreat thee to rest. It is now the fourth night since sleep closed thine eye-lids, even for a little while; the spirit must sink with much labour. Deny me not, my Father." "Return to thine own repose, my child," said her parent, "the hours of my watching are not yet over. Disturb me not again, daughter." At the last words the maiden submissively bowed her head, and departed sorrowfully, as the Philosopher again wrapt himself in his deep and holy meditations. Gradually the light of conviction beamed on his mind, and a smile of purest satisfaction gladdened his pale features. A rush of joyful sensations filled his heart, as closing his eyes, he leant back, giving himself up to the delightful consciousness of having arrived at a long sought for conclusion. "Repaid, repaid," he murmured, "a thousand times repaid, for all the labour and watching, and ever-wakeful thoughts of days, and months, and years. God of the Hebrews," continued he, as he left the chamber, and looked from the house-top on the star-lit heavens above him, "show now thy sign, and my heart shall bless thee; make manifest thy presence, and I will give thee praise." Long and earnestly did the wise man gaze on the countless orbs, as each in its bright sphere



rolled on in silent loveliness. Whether it lifted its pale light above the eastern horizon, or mounted higher in its glorious zenith, or declined towards the darkened west, still his eye tracked its onward course; and still disappointment followed its disappearance. One alone sunk not like the others: one alone remained stationary in the illimitable space, shedding a bright yet hallowed radiance on the sleeping world beneath. "Behold the Hope of Israel appeareth," exclaimed the enraptured Spectator, "God of their Fathers, I thank thee!" And throwing himself prostrate, his heart rose to the Great First Cause with as much devotion as the Hebrew before the Holy of Holies, where so often Jehovah had mysteriously manifested his presence. Whilst the anxiety of his mind remained, the body felt no weariness; but now, when that anxiety was changed for calm delight, his limbs relaxed, his thoughts fled, and with the words of praise still faltering on his lips—the Philosopher slumbered.

When he again arose the scene of starry grandeur had vanished, and its softened glory was replaced by the sun's rays struggling through a thin white vapour which floated over the great river of Babylon. From some parts this veil of morning's beauty was removed, and discovered points more lovely from their being rare. In a short time a light breeze sprang up, and sporting awhile with the fleecy mass, at length dispersed it in all directions, and displayed at once the scene of earth's former magnificence, and present vanity. Before him lay the remains of that "golden city," "the lady of kingdoms, once abundant in treasures, and the praise of the whole earth." Where now were its temples, its palaces, its hanging gardens, and many rivers? The Lord of the earth had spoken, and they disappeared; his voice had declared it, and the mighty city became a desert. Its stupendous walls alone remained unshaken by the hand of time; all within them appeared levelled with the very earth, except where the temple of Belus, gigantic even in its ruins, stood alone in the solitary place, like the awful figure of Prophecy, pointing to the fulfilment of her words. The Philosopher's dwelling formed one of a few scattered houses in the suburbs,—a pitiful substitute for the noble line of palaces which formerly ornamented that city of wonders. Totally

abstracted from the busy world, he devoted himself amidst this waste of ruins, to watch the further accomplishment of those prophetic words which had been so remarkably verified in the scene before him. And now, nothing doubting, he left his home, and the sole daughter of his heart, to join his brethren in science, and wander forth seeking the promised Messiah of Israel. Together these wise men visited the splendid dwelling of the proud Herod, demanding, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" Together they proceeded to the lowly manger of Bethlehem, and, despising outward splendour, welcomed in his humble birth-place the Holy Babe, as the future image of the great and invisible God. Then warned by an Omniscient Providence, they avoided the courts of princes, and traced back their steps, rejoicing at having discerned the first gleams of that light, which was to lighten the whole earth. It is needless to describe with what unfeigned joy the deserted child hailed the return of her parent; or how, wondering, she listened to his delighted anticipations of future glory to be shed over all nations. In after years when a hushed multitude hung on the precious words of their Teacher, none felt more deeply the truth and blessedness of the glad tidings, or followed more devotedly as disciples of their great Master, than those who from the beginning had traced his course,—the aged Philosopher and his beloved child.

(In all ages and countries men have arisen, whose minds, superior to their fellow mortals, perceived the first dawns of Truth, and rejoiced in its fuller developement. Not only in Israel, but in Europe, America, and even in benighted India, Heaven has raised its agents to sound the depths of falsehood and superstition, and make manifest the unsullied brightness of that pearl of great price. Ignorant creatures have too often placed obstructions in their way, but God *has* favoured, and *will* for ever favour, their glorious exertions.)

R.

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## CHURCH REFORM.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

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VARIOUS are the plans of individuals for the Reform of our National Church. It is not my purpose to enumerate them. They are widely, though it may be feared not sufficiently, promulgated; and whether the subject is considered by the public adequately to its importance may be fairly questioned.\* Some writers apply themselves to the constitution of the Church at large, others to the mere form of Church government, and many to its doctrines and ritual; but I have not found a reformer who professedly suggests alterations on the model of Jesus himself, or of that liberty of his gospel "wherewith he has made us free." It would appear to be the most natural and most beneficial, to refer to the design of our blessed Lord in the establishment of his "Kingdom" on earth; and to separate the consideration of Christian truth and principle from all those temporal interests with which, since its introduction into the world it has been clogged by governments, institutions, and polity, or by the tyranny, fraud, or weakness of man. Its own inherent authority is not disputed. We happily live in a land where its genuine efficacy is acknowledged, and I hope I may also say, where its blessings and advantages are universally admitted. It is allowed, even in its present imperfect prevalence, to possess an influence over the human mind superior to all legislation, and to be worthy of higher veneration than any system of human laws—that its sole and entire object is, the well being and happiness of man. What then do individuals aim at, but its universal dominion as well as diffusion—that its operation should have free course over the affections of the human mind—that it should become planted, watered, and bring

\* For instance the Corporation of London have it is said determined on pulling down twelve or fourteen Churches, not considering that the unworshipping Christians if they were induced to do so, could fill double and treble this number of Churches in London. In many places opposition is making to Church Rates—instead of making those Rates applicable to the repairs of Churches of every Christian denomination. In the impetuosity of individuals it is possible Reform may begin at the wrong end.

forth its fruits in every soil, and flourish wherever man is found? Every reformer intends his scheme to promote the success of Christianity. Few it is hoped, (if any) have the sinister object of narrowing its interests to party or persuasion, or to reduce its tolerant principles to any exclusive creed, form, ritual or policy. Without disturbing therefore the minor arrangements of the established Church (at present so called) in its immunities, I would enquire through the medium of your excellent Miscellany, whether any harm could result from throwing religion open (essentially at it at present exists in America), and in giving to parishes and branch congregations the choice of their own minister and doctrines, but only reserving a precautionary veto in some appointed body, as a security that the individuals so appointed should be men of approved character, education and fitness. I am supposing of course, that the Church should be detached from the State. If the parishioners of A choose a Trinitarian or a Unitarian for their minister, he should be inducted as their Rector, Vicar, or Curate, (as it might happen). Ministers of every denomination should be equally eligible—their pretensions being left to the judgment of those who had the appointment to bestow. The doctrinal views of the Holy Scriptures, as entertained by candidates, should be determined by the particular Church bound to support its own Minister. Sufficient theological knowledge may be supposed, in this reading and enquiring age, to exist (or if not, where endowed with such an interest it would soon be attained), for regulating an appointment connected with the highest hopes—even the eternal interests of Man. I should be happy to see the subject of Church Reform simply canvassed in your pages, in which I might submit to you occasionally a few observations, if you considered them worth your notice.

X.

*London, 17th November, 1833.*

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## THE SCRIPTURE INTERPRETER.—No. VI.

Luke v. v. 22. vii. v. 39, 40. ix. v. 46, 47.

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IN the last article of this kind, we classed together and examined several passages, commonly brought forward by Trinitarians in proof of the *Omnipresence* of Christ. Still keeping in view our plan of proceeding through the books of the New Testament in order, we shall, in the present article, consider some passages from the gospel of Luke, which are referred to with equal confidence in proof of another supposed divine attribute of our Saviour,—*Omniscience*.

“*But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts.*” “*Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee, &c.*” “*Then there arose a reasoning among them which of them should be greatest. And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child,*” &c. It appears to be expressly declared in these passages that Jesus was acquainted with the secret thoughts of men,—that he knew what was passing in their hearts, though they only reasoned within themselves. It is argued from this, that Jesus was omniscient, and therefore truly and properly God. Who but God, (it is asked) can search the hearts of men, and know their thoughts before they are uttered? This is the peculiar prerogative of the Most High; and being thus clearly ascribed to Christ, it fully proves his essential deity. It is thus that Trinitarians argue from these passages.

In the first place, it is obviously to be remarked, that even if we should grant, that the knowledge here ascribed to Jesus belonged to him *by nature*, of his own essential perfection, yet it does not amount to omniscience, nor to anything approaching to omniscience. It may suit the purposes of Trinitarians so to represent it; but, in fact, this is making nothing short of an infinite addition to the literal meaning of the Scriptures. That Jesus knew what



was secretly passing, at that moment, in the hearts of those individuals, which is all that the Scriptures *assert*—and that Jesus was omniscient, which is what Trinitarians *infer* from this language,—are two propositions that differ in the extent of their meaning as the finite differs from the infinite. The latter proposition can be true of no one but God. The former evidently might be true of a created being; and one not of the most exalted order either; though if he were possessed of this knowledge by an attribute of his own nature, he must undoubtedly be a *superhuman* being. But of actual omniscience, of proper *deity*, such knowledge would afford no proof whatever. It may be replied, perhaps, that although these passages should not be regarded as in themselves indubitable proofs of the omniscience of Christ, yet they serve strongly to confirm this doctrine, in conjunction with still more explicit passages, especially with that plain, uncontradicted assertion of the apostle Peter, recorded in John's Gospel, “Lord, thou knowest all things!” (c. xxi. v. 17.) We answer that if this assertion itself must be considered as an indubitable proof of our Saviour's omniscience, then the other passages may be fairly taken in confirmation of the doctrine; but that if the stronger argument utterly fail, the weaker cannot give it support. The same Evangelist who has related this saying of Peter, has also himself said of all sincere Christian believers,—“Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” (1 John, ii, v. 20.) He surely did not mean to ascribe omniscience to the Christian believers? This, we think, affords the clearest evidence that, in the phraseology of this writer, “all things” does not necessarily mean all things absolutely, but only all things to which the discourse relates in the context. The believers, to whom the epistle was addressed, knew all the pure truths and principles of the gospel. Christ knew all the thoughts and affections of Peter towards him. In *their* case, we are expressly told, it was because they had an unction from the Holy One; because they were enlightened by the spirit of God. Why, in *his* case, may not the knowledge have been derived from the same all-sufficient source? In neither case is there any proof of natural and proper omniscience.

That our Saviour was possessed of a secret, miraculous knowledge of the thoughts and hearts of men, we have not the least inclination to dispute. Such an endowment would seem to be very servicable, if not absolutely necessary to him, in the discharge of his heavenly office; and the words of Scripture are too express, to allow us to doubt that he was truly favoured with it. We cannot approve of the remark which the venerable Author of the "*Calm Inquiry*" ventures to make,—that "perhaps the historians might mean nothing more than that he judged from their countenances what was passing in their minds." This method of settling the question appears to us to be rather *too calm*. Whether Christ had this power constantly residing in him, or given him on special, though frequent occasions, is a point which we feel ourselves incompetent to determine. But that, on either supposition, it was imparted to him, like all his other miraculous qualifications, by God, and was not the result of natural omniscience in himself,—of this we do feel thoroughly persuaded. His own positive and repeated declarations that all knowledge, wisdom, power, and authority, were *given him by the Father*, would alone expel all doubts from our minds on this subject. He who gave Christ supernatural power to work miracles, also gave him supernatural penetration to know the secret thoughts of men's hearts. There is no more evidence of natural omniscience in the one endowment, than of natural omnipotence in the other.

It deserves observation, that the opinions of the very persons who witnessed this display of supernatural knowledge in Jesus, is decidedly with us, and against Trinitarians. *They* did not infer that because our Saviour knew what was passing secretly in the minds of men, therefore he was the omniscient God. They only inferred that he was a prophet,—that he had been sent by God, and was inspired by God. When Jesus convinced the woman of Samaria, that he knew the secrets of her life,—that he was acquainted with the thoughts and feelings of her mind, when she replied "I have no husband,"—what was her inference? "The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art *a prophet*." This was sensible and just. The inference of the Trinitarian is, "Sir, I perceive that thou art the Almighty and Omniscient God,"—which is

rash, false, and ————. What is the reasoning of the Pharisees on the same subject? “This man,” said they, “*if he were a prophet*, would have known who and what this woman is.” They did not infer, it seems, that one who knew the secrets of men’s lives and hearts, must be the omniscient God, but thought this would be the proper endowment of a *prophet*. We confess ourselves to agree, thus far, with the Pharisees. Other opinions and qualities of that “most straitest sect” of the Jews, we willingly leave for the adoption of more orthodox people.

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*A Report of Addresses delivered at the Ninth Anniversary of the opening of the Salford Unitarian Chapel, in the Exchange Dining-room, Monday Evening, December 30th, 1833. (Taken in Short-hand by John Harland.)* London: R. Hunter, St. Paul’s Church-Yard; T. Forrest, Market-street, Manchester.

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A VERY cheering little book,—shewing, amongst other important matters, “how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,” and how swiftly the cause of truth is travelling on in the vicinity of the great northern rail-road. If any thing could reconcile us to episcopal translations, it would be the hope of seeing the Bishop of Exeter some day translated to the See of Chester, that he may have the felicity of counting more Unitarian congregations in his Diocese than he can find at present, and some, too, whose numbers are not so “very small.” Salford, as most of our readers are aware, is a suburb, or rather a part, of Manchester. The members of the Salford Unitarian congregation are accustomed to commemorate the opening of their chapel by an annual meeting. We were once privileged with a sight of the celebration of these mysteries,—and brought away from them an impression that will not soon be obliterated.

On this occasion, the meeting was held in the evening, in the Exchange Dining and Ante Rooms. The Rev. J. J. Tayler, minister of Mosley-street Chapel, took the chair, and gave this Christian-like reason for doing so :—

“that he might express a feeling of friendly cordiality towards that Christian society, and his hope that this, and all other similar meetings, might strengthen the feelings of friendliness and harmony which had hitherto subsisted between the three Unitarian congregations in this town.”

*Three Unitarian congregations in one town*—and that, not from any paltry disagreement with one another, but from the actual demands of the population! Think of that Dr. Philpotts! Is not that “still more satisfactory,” than the existence of only a single congregation in Cornwall?

The following remarks of the invited preacher, the Rev. Samuel Bache, of Birmingham, please us much. They relate to a subject which has often presented itself to our own minds in the same light;—

There is a spurious kind of liberty abroad in the world: it is no liberty; it is indifference; and the distinction between it and true liberty is so obvious, that I cannot but express my own surprise that persons of intelligence, and well-informed on general subjects, should be guilty of confounding these dissimilar qualities. Indifference may lead a man entirely to regard the sentiments of his fellow-man upon that subject to which I have referred, as of no consequence to him, whether they adopt what he regards as the truth, or whether they are involved in what he believes to be error. But liberty is totally distinct from this. It implies, in the first place, that the man who exercises this quality has opinions of his own, which he maintains as distinct from the opinions of those who oppose him, and that he maintains those opinions in a spirit of charity towards those who differ from him. True liberty will never lead a man to give up his own sentiments upon any subject—it is the spirit in which those sentiments are held as regards others; and the only foundation on which true liberty rests, is the entire recognition of the right of private judgment on all matters.

The Rev. J. R. Beard, the very able and epergetic minister of the Salford congregation, thus happily sets forth the true character of our faith.

There is an idea abroad that Unitarianism consists in the denial of the Trinity, in the denial of Original Sin, and in a long string of negatives; whereas these are nothing more than the purification, the cleansing out of the temple of truth, leaving all the bright and beautiful images of truth itself still existing in the temple. For we recognise as our fundamental principles the simple and absolute unity of God; and that He is essentially good; so that all things, whether they be the gifts of nature, of providence, or of grace, proceed from his unpurchased, spontaneous benignity, entirely irrespectively of any merit on our part, or of any merit earned by another. And further, that we recognise as his messenger, specially raised up and fitted for the great work to which God des-

tinued him, and as our Saviour, saving us from death, from our sins and passions, from our bad habits, our low desires, and sanctifying the true disciple with blended holiness and love,—Jesus the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world. And we believe that there is between God and Christ such a union, not of nature, not of essence, but such a union as that the two may be said to be one—one, as represented in the New Testament, in design, in will, in action, so that the words of one are the words of the other, and the deeds of one are the deeds of the other; in such a manner, that when we listen to Christ we conceive ourselves as hearing the words of God; and when we hear of his miracles, we conceive that in them we behold the finger of God. I do not propose to argue at present that this is a saving faith, but I merely state these things to show that Unitarianism does not consist in negatives.

Our excellent friend, the Rev. J. G. Robberds, is even more than usually fervent and moving on this occasion. Speaking of the total abolition of all State Establishments of religion, he makes the following pointed remarks:—

I know it is said by some that this would be leaving that religion to “the chapter of accidents.” That was the very phrase I read only the other day in an argument in the *London Times*,—that without an establishment we should leave Christianity, we should leave religion, to “the chapter of accidents.” I have not learned to think or to speak so irreverently of God’s providential arrangements,—I have not learnt to think that there is in the moral world any such thing as accident;—I have not learnt to believe that He, without whom a sparrow falleth not to the ground, has left without the means of unfailing support the religion which he himself implanted in the world. And much as we are at this time spoken against—much as we are charged with wishing to degrade our blessed Saviour, I have learned to put a firm trust in his declaration that his true Church is founded upon a rock, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. While, however, I have this conviction, that it would be far better for Christianity to be left to the zeal which I believe it is capable of inspiring in the hearts of its believers, I do by no means think it is a consequence necessarily following from this conviction, that we should desire to see any sudden or violent removal of the present establishment.

Our readers, we are sure, will not blame us for laying these extracts before them. We recommend them to procure the little volume, and to read it for their comfort and edification.



## DISSENTERS' GRIEVANCES.

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A MEETING of the Dissenters of Exeter was held in the Subscription Rooms of that city, on Friday, January 10th to agree on a memorial to Ministers for the removal of those grievances to which the non-conformists of England are still subject. Meetings of this kind have been frequent and numerous throughout the country ; and from the evident tone of public feeling on the subject, there can scarcely exist a doubt that most of the objects aimed at will speedily be attained. The justice of the case is too clear to be disputed. The only practical difficulty in the way of relief, we suspect, will arise from the loss of fees and other emoluments by the clergy. The Government will be very tender of their interests.

The following resolutions and memorial were adopted at the Exeter meeting. The speakers on the occasion were the Rev. Mr. Bristowe, Mr. J. D. Osborn, the Rev. Mr. Glyde, the Rev. Mr. Carne, the Rev. Mr. Acton, Mr. John Hull Terrell, Mr. Richard Evans, and John Mackintosh, Esq. :—

“ That although thankful as Protestant Dissenters for the religious liberty we enjoy, and especially for the relief afforded by the recent repeal of the Test and Corporation acts, we still feel that we are subject to grievances, of which we may reasonably and justly complain.”

“ That although the connexion at present existing between the Church and the State, is considered by us both a grievance pressing on ourselves, and injurious to the general interests of religion, we are willing to defer urging its dissolution until more information on the subject shall have been diffused, and the sentiments of our fellow-countrymen more fully formed and developed.”

“ That the grievances from which we think it proper to claim immediate relief, are the following :—the payment of Church rates and Easter offerings ; the necessity of being married at the altars of the church of England ; the inability to be interred by our own ministers in the parochial burying grounds ; the want of a registration of births, deaths and wills, unconnected with any religious sect ; and exclusion from the national universities.”

“ That a memorial, embodying these grievances, be presented to the Right Honourable Earl Grey, and the other Ministers of his Majesty's Government, and that this memorial be as follows :—”

*To the Right Honorable Charles, Earl Grey, First Lord of the Treasury, and the other Members of his Majesty's Government, the Memorial of the undersigned Protestant Dissenters of the City of Exeter, Sheweth—*

That although many bodies of Protestant Dissenters have already presented your Lordship with memorials, setting forth what they consider their grievances and claims, we venture respectfully to express our own feelings and wishes on these subjects, for the purpose of furnishing his Majesty's Ministers with another opportunity of judging what are the sentiments generally entertained by Protestant Dissenters of this kingdom.

We imagine that it cannot but be satisfactory to your Lordship to learn fully from ourselves, what are our grounds of complaint; and the confidence we repose in the wisdom and integrity of his Majesty's Government, is so great as to lead us to hope that the just demands of so large and loyal a body of His Majesty's subjects, will be fairly met, and fully satisfied.

On the question of the lawfulness and expediency of a Church establishment, under any form, although the majority of us entertain serious doubts on the point, your Memorialists forbear to enter. We pass by also the circumstance that the funds appropriated by the State to the maintenance of religion, are bestowed exclusively on the Professors of one form of Religion, and confine ourselves to the statement of those grievances, from which we think ourselves entitled to be at once, and unhesitatingly relieved.

As we erect and keep in repair places of Worship for ourselves, wholly at our own expense, we feel it a hardship to be compelled also to contribute to the erection and support of those belonging to another religious community. Nor is it less annoying to be required to make, in the shape of Easter dues, offerings of gratitude we cannot feel, and an acknowledgment of services we have never received. The sum exacted from each individual is sometimes so considerable as to become a pecuniary burden. But if too small to be felt as a burden, it is always felt as an injury, which the law indeed sanctions, but the plain principles of equity condemn. As the Government of which your Lordship is the head, has already pronounced a vestry cess in Ireland inexpedient, and therefore abolished it, your Memorialists confidently expect a redress from grievances of the same nature.

The parochial burying places, if not always public property, ought certainly, since their expences are defrayed by rates levied in common on the Inhabitants of the respective parishes, to be open to public use. We ask, therefore, the right of being interred in them, in our own way, and by our own Ministers. If relieved from the payment of Church Rates we shall willingly, when availing ourselves of this right, pay such fees as the Legislature may appoint.

By the present system of Registration of Baptisms and Burials your Memorialists are constantly exposed to many and serious inconveniences.—The birth of our children can be inserted in the legal registers only at the price of submission to a ceremony to which we have strong conscientious objections of the most powerful kind. The privilege enjoyed by the Episcopal Clergy of being exclusively connected with the registration and proof of Wills,

confers on them an invidious distinction, and opens to them improper sources of emolument. We therefore respectfully urge on his Majesty's Government, the propriety of establishing a general system of registration of births, deaths, and wills, unconnected with any religious sect.

The solemnization of marriage exclusively and necessarily at the altars of the Church of England, is both deplored by your Memorialists as a general evil, and felt as a burden pressing with peculiar heaviness on themselves. That persons of all characters, and however disposed, should be compelled to engage in a solemn act of Christian worship, we regard as a violence done to the sanctity of religion. And that we should be required to take part in a religious ceremony of which we disapprove, and receive the ministrations of a church from which we dissent, we feel to be an infringement of the rights of conscience. We ask, therefore, to be allowed to ratify the marriage contract, so far as religion is concerned, in any way which we think most acceptable to God, and which at such a season may be congenial with our own feelings. In asking this, we ask only for that which has long been enjoyed by such of our fellow subjects in Ireland and Scotland, as dissent from the churches established by law in those countries, and which, in England, has been conceded to the Society of Friends.

The last grievance which your Memorialists would press on your Lordships's attention, is that of exclusion from the Universities, by the imposition of tests, oaths, and declarations, which conscience forbids us to take or subscribe. Although not without colleges and academies of our own, we are sensible of the benefits to be derived from admission to the national seats of learning; and as they were endowed by the liberality of our common ancestors, or by the munificence of our country, we claim they should be open

all who are able to improve their advantages, or willing to aspire to their honours. Such are the grievances of which we, your Lordship's Memorialists, complain, and the claims we think ourselves justified in advancing.

In conclusion, we beg to remind your Lordship, that although furnished with such grounds of complaint, neither we nor our forefathers have manifested a restless or subordinate spirit, or sought to obtain redress by improper means. We have ever been willing rather to endure the burdens under which we labour, than by indiscreet and violent attempts to shake them off, to endanger the safety or peace of the community at large. The time is at length arrived, when, under a government which has already distinguished itself by measures of reform at once vigorous and wise, it is a duty we owe to ourselves and children to seek relief from evils which we have not ceased to feel, because we have borne them patiently. We trust the same prudence and firmness which your Lordship and the other Members of His Majesty's Government have manifested in bringing to a happy termination other important matters, will be employed in speedily and satisfactorily removing the grounds of complaint which we have ventured respectfully to enumerate; and we devoutly pray that He who is the Ruler of States, and the source of wisdom, may so direct your counsels and control events, as to secure the lasting honour of your Lordship, the welfare of the state, and the prosperity of his true and spiritual Church.

## THE RIGHT OF DISSENTERS TO INTERFERE WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THE CHURCH.

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THE following letter, extracted from the *Patriot* newspaper, for January 8th, relates to a subject of so much importance at the present moment, that we shall need no apology for laying it before our readers. We entirely and heartily concur in the views of the writer. With the affairs of a sect of Episcopalians, standing on the same footing as any other sect in the country, we should have no right to interfere. But with the affairs of our national Church we have, although Dissenters, a perfect right to interfere; and it is to be hoped we shall make it manifest that we know how to exercise this right :—

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Sir,—It is no uncommon thing for Church People to express their surprise that Dissenters are continually meddling with the concerns of the Establishment. They seem to imagine that because a person attends a Meeting house, he must have lost all right and title to exercise his voice, vote, or pen, in the affairs of the hierarchy. Though such a sentiment can only be current among ignorant or ill-informed people, if you will allow me a very little space in your valuable columns, I will endeavour to show these simple folks the grounds on which Dissenters act in ecclesiastical matters.

I. They possess a right to meddle with the Church, because, in common with Episcopalians, they are members of the State. The Establishment is a national institution; all its wealth, revenues, and buildings belong to the British public; all its officers, from the Archbishop to the village sexton, are salaried servants of the public; and all its doctrines, ceremonies, and discipline are appointed and arranged by the secular authorities of the kingdom. These positions are perfectly established by history, parliamentary enactments, and the declarations of the Church in her canons and articles. The hierarchy has not an inch of private property; all is in trust, and resumable by the State at pleasure. The army and navy are not more under the dominion of the civil government than the Church: and our legislature might as constitutionally reform or demolish this church, as it might remodel or dissolve corps of marines. Now, Dissenters being members of the State, and being invested with the prerogatives and privileges of the empire, as much as their conforming fellow subjects; they are of course entitled to interfere with the affairs of the State religion, to vote for its preservation, reformation, or entire destruction; to expose the errors of its doctrines, the evils of its ceremonies, or the misconduct of its officers;—and while a State or national religion shall exist in these realms, however pure its

creed, simple its forms, or exemplary its ministers, every Dissenter will possess a right, from his civil capacity, to control its operations, and call its stipendiary agents to a strict account of their stewardship. In fact, they have no alternative, to a considerable degree. As constituents of the Commons' House of Representatives, they will necessarily vote for men who must immediately manage the Church of England.

II. They also possess a right as legal and canonical members of the Church of England.—By the laws of the land, and according to the doctrines of the Hierarchy, every man in the country is as much a member of this Church as my Lord Bishop himself. Attending the Chapel does not in any measure affect this constitutional relationship. Though a Nonconformist pastor, the writer is at liberty to communicate at the national altars; and can oblige, if inclined, the Government minister to baptize his children, marry them when of age, and bury them when dead. He is also empowered to attend the parish vestries, and vote on all questions affecting the concerns of the parochial place of worship. There is not a right possessed by any Conformist that he might not exercise—and very properly too, since every infidel, rake, and blockhead in the country is legally a member of the Church, and stands invested with the same prerogatives as the holiest adherent of the national religion. Therefore, when Dissenters employ their franchise, their tongue, or the press, in sustaining, correcting, or annihilating the Establishment, they engage in no affair not perfectly consistent with their connexion with the object of their plaudits or assaults—and, as previously asserted, while a State Church remains, their right to interfere with it must remain also, and so must their legal membership. For it would be passing strange, were we to have a national religion, sustained by public property and taxation, which should not be as open to all the public as it is at present. The diminution of its revenues would not alter the case, nor would the character of its possessions (whether they consisted in tithes, moduses, rates, or land) abridge the claims of Nonconformists; for if the property were public, all the denizens of the empire would be entitled to inspect and control their appropriation.

In fact, when the Dissenter exercises his franchise, or otherwise employs his constitutional powers, on the political or the religious affairs of the country, he does not act in the capacity of a Dissenter at all; for in that capacity he has no constitutional powers to exercise. While his attendance at the meeting-house does not remove or abridge his previous prerogatives, neither does it modify or enlarge them. In this respect he retains untouched all his original rights, as a member both of the State and of the Establishment. The case is paralleled in other institutions; for a man may belong to a masonic fraternity, a philosophical society, or a company of merchants, without being divested of any national or religious immunities. Dissenters found their claims on Government to certain privileges and exemptions, not in the character of Independents, Baptists, or Wesleyans, but as compulsory Churchmen, and component parts of the body politic; and in no other capacity are they qualified to vote either in matters of the Church or the State.



Such a view of the subject not only meets the objection noticed at the head of this article; but it is also calculated to remove the scruples of some good people in the ranks of Nonconformity—who seem to think that Dissenters have neither right nor reason to meddle with the English Hierarchy. But if they consider it as a national institution, of which all British citizens are members, their right is indisputable, and the non-exercise of it, to a considerable degree, is impracticable. And if the Establishment be as corrupt and unscriptural as most of them believe, they have not only reason to seek its reformation and purity, but are absolutely bound, by imperious obligations, to do so. Still, as in their denominational capacities they are invested with no prerogatives to intermeddle with either State or Church affairs, they must act as mere subjects of his Majesty's Government, and as legal members of the parliamentary religion. Let them, therefore, leave the Dissenter out of the question; and, as when they exerted their influence for the abolition of colonial slavery, take their stand on the broad and tenable ground of civil and political prerogatives, while labouring to destroy those monopolies and oppressive evils which ought not to be tolerated in any state under heaven.

Perhaps it may be proper to add, that this national position of Dissenters, in reference to any constitutional efforts for controlling the affairs of the Parliamentary Church, does not affect their conventional operations to remove such grievances as peculiarly oppress themselves, or to obtain such further facilities as may favour the execution of measures that may be contemplated, consistent with the peace and stability of the empire. They stand on the like ground as persons pertaining to our Trading, Commercial, or Agricultural Interests; who can act in civil matters only as simple members of the community, but who may, in specific combinations, equitably employ their franchise and influence to obtain exemptions or advantages that shall benefit themselves in their exclusive and associated capacities.

Yours, &c.

Winchester.

W. THORN.

## OBITUARY.

On the 30th of July, 1833, after a very short illness, in the city of Lincoln, whither he had been invited by the Unitarian congregation of that place, in the first instance as a temporary supply, and subsequently to become their pastor, the REV. JOSEPH ROWE COMMINS. The deceased was a native of Tavistock, in Devonshire, and eldest son of Mr. John Commins, bookseller, in that town. He discovered, in very early life, a predilection for the ministerial office, frequently personating, in his solitary sports, the popular preachers of his juvenile days. With a view to the important profession of an instructor of others, he received an excellent Grammar-school education, under the able tuition of the Rev. Wm. Evans, Minister of the Unitarian Society in his native place;

whence he removed, in the year 1828, to the Manchester College, in York, in which enlightened seminary he was entered as a divinity student on the full foundation—a privilege never to be forgotten by him. Here, during a period of five years of diligent and successful application were awarded to him all the academic honours usually conferred on the highest proficient, at the several public examinations. He entertained the highest reverence towards his *alma mater*, and even expressed himself in terms of the most enthusiastic admiration of its discipline and of the talents and liberality of its professors. His erudite tutors, and those among his fellow disciples who best knew him, are alone qualified to pronounce an indisputable opinion as to his professional acquirements: on these the writer of this simple memoir presumes not to expatiate, his sole object being to rescue from oblivion the memory of a beloved child: but, from the minutes of his journal, now in the possession of his parents, which is continued down to within ten days of his demise, it is apparent that his whole heart was in the work to which he had devoted himself: hence, it may be fairly inferred, that, had it been the will of the Supreme Arbiter of life and death to have prolonged his days, he would have approved himself a zealous and useful minister in the church of Christ. In justice to his domestic virtues, it should not be withheld, that he was in disposition gentle and reserved, a most obedient and affectionate son, and a kind hearted brother; and that in his whole conduct he fully realized the anxious desires and expectations of his now bereaved and mourning relatives. In the cemetery surrounding the Unitarian chapel at Lincoln, a neat stone, suitably inscribed, indicates the spot where the remains of this youthful labourer in the vineyard of truth were deposited, in the twenty-third year of his age. The funeral service was performed by the present venerable minister of the chapel, the Reverend Israel Worsley.

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#### TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

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Our Sidmouth correspondent will see, from the first article of the present number, which was in print before the receipt of his paper, why we could not avail ourselves of his favours.—Eumenes on the ‘Law of Christ,’ has been received, and shall have early insertion. We cannot comply with G. R. B.’s request, but shall be happy to give him room in our pages, if he will undertake the task himself. “Examiner” on the Athanasian Creed has also come to hand.

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# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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No. IX.]

MARCH, 1834.

[Vol. I.

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## REVIVED POPULAR HOSTILITY TO UNITARIANS.

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JUDGING from various “signs of the times,” we are of opinion that the lovers of Christian peace and concord, in this country, are likely to be soon gratified with witnessing a modern Crusade. The infidels to be attacked in the present day are, not the Saracen followers of Mahomet, but the wicked and obstinate Unitarians :—wicked, because they view God’s truth in the Gospel differently from other believers ; and obstinate, because they will not abandon their views at the repeated summons of orthodox assurance. The strong holds, the holy places, from which these infidels must if possible be driven, are the chapels, the schools, the alms-houses, the pious and charitable trusts of every kind, which they have received from the godly of past generations ;—the public societies to which they have united themselves, for the promotion of the general ends of Christian piety and benevolence ;—the credit and honour which they may have acquired with the more liberal portion of their countrymen, by their intelligence, by their rationality, and their zealous support of all plans of reformation, civil and religious ;—even the influence which justly belongs to them as respectable, charitable, and actively useful members of society, in the more private walks of life. In all these points we are to be assailed, from all these lodgments we are to be expelled, if orthodox enmity can accomplish its wishes. As it was of old, so it is now—the hosts which are hastening on to this sacred warfare, are of all names, and gathered from all quarters. Parties that have their own mutual quarrels to settle, their own separate designs of ambition and jealousy, agree to lay them aside, so far as that they may unite in one strong effort to crush the common enemy. The self-styled *evangelical* churchman, at once the fiercest and weakest of all zealots ; the worldly-minded supporter of a rich ecclesiastical establishment ; the plausible, dex-

terous Independent, who of late has waxen too fat in his prosperity; and lastly, the honest, stern, but rather bigoted and saturnine Baptist;—these are all apparently linked together, in the unanimous purpose of assailing the doctrines and influence of Unitarians. If they march under distinct banners, their steps are bent towards the same destination. It may not be easy to assign all the true causes of this *revived* spirit of hostility against our opinions and persons, at a time when many amongst us flattered themselves that such a spirit was extinct for ever;—though some of these causes, we think, are sufficiently evident. However this may be, it is clearly the fact, that such a Crusade is commencing. If we were so inclined, we are not sure that we could not point out Peter the Hermit. In regard to date, we are not certain whether the honour of priority in this Christian-like undertaking, should be assigned to those who endeavoured to expel Unitarians from the British and Foreign Bible Society, or to the institutors of the suit against Lady Hewley's Trustees. Whichever was first in the field, either of these parties is worthy to take the lead in so pious an enterprise. The first-mentioned set of bigots, it is true, were obliged to close their campaign under the disgrace of a thorough defeat. The others may appear for the present to have gained a victory. Whether this difference of fortune, in their holy warfare, may not settle the claims of superiority and leadership in favour of the last mentioned party, is a question we must leave to be determined between themselves. It seems, at all events, that others are zealous to follow their honourable example. We learn from a most respectable cotemporary publication, “that there are no less than twenty or thirty dissenting ministers in London, who have refused to officiate at the City-road Orphan School Chapel, on account of the Socinians being appointed in turn to preach the same lecture.” If we are not misinformed, there are some who, on the same grounds, have withdrawn themselves from the general Board of Dissenters of the three Denominations, assembling at Dr. William's Library, in Red-cross Street; and are incessantly condemning and rebuking many of their more liberal-minded orthodox brethren, for not adopting a similar line of conduct. We perceive that a newspaper devoted to the interests of extreme orthodoxy, *records* with becoming

horror the shocking facts, that even at this day, one of the trustees of Coward's Academy is a member of a Unitarian congregation, and that a Chapel in the neighbourhood of London is used for divine worship, alternately, by a Unitarian and by a Trinitarian minister, with their respective flocks. But these are only the most *conspicuous* signs of the storm of hatred and persecution, which is fast gathering, and is destined, by the wicked spirits who have raised it, to fall upon our devoted heads. We think there are other signs innumerable, which must present themselves to the notice of every one who watches the character and temper of the times, as exhibited in the conduct of religious parties. Vituperation directed against Unitarians seems now, even more than it was wont to be, the favorite theme of vulgar pulpit oratory. Scarcely any young divine, either episcopalian or dissenter, can go through his first displays of ability and eloquence as a preacher, without launching the arrows of his real or affected indignation upon us. Even the Pope and the Devil escape their usual portion of abuse, that all the vials of orthodox wrath may be emptied at once on the wicked Socinians. The good ladies, who walk about distributing Bibles and charity, make it one of their first inquiries of the objects of their benevolence, what place of worship they frequent on the sabbath? and they have learnt to lift up their "hands with bounty laden," and their "eyes in soft pity streaming," with a peculiar expression of horror, whenever they hear the name of the *Unitarian Chapel*. In short there is an evident and growing conspiracy, the result of combined hatred, fear, and cunning, to put us down by persecution and abuse. Our arguments are left unrefuted, that our motives and designs may be misrepresented. Instead of answering our books, the adversary would expel us from our chapels. Finding it impossible to hinder us from pursuing our separate course, in the propagation of supposed heresies, they would fain prevent us from uniting with others in the promulgation of truth and charity:—seing that, as a sect, we are obstinately bent upon continuance in what they apprehend to be mischief, they are determined that, at least, we shall not be permitted to conceal the malignity of our characters from the world by doing the least portion of good.

We have already said, that it does not appear to us



easy to assign the exact causes of this revived demonstration of a bad spirit against Unitarians. Our opponents would only be rendered the more angry, if we were to say, that their recent conduct has been occasioned by their experience of the impossibility of defeating us in the open field of rational and scriptural argument. Yet why should we not say it, since we believe that this is one cause of their newly invigorated bitterness? They have been waiting sufficiently long, with the hope of seeing us die a natural death, or perish under the stroke of their proper theological weapons; but we are too long-lived and too hardy for their patience. They have consequently been driven, in their despair, to make one grand effort to crush us by means unknown to honourable warfare. We can liken them to nothing but boys who, having too rashly engaged in combat with an adversary they cannot overcome, lose their temper and begin to fight unfairly:—seeing they can make no great impression on us by their blows, they are not ashamed to kick, and pinch, and bite. Nevertheless, we shall be fully able, we doubt not, to withstand it all, and they will be obliged at last to retreat with sore discomfiture; the more disgraced that, having contended by base means, they will have lost, not only the victory, but their honour. To speak more gravely, Trinitarians begin exceedingly to dread the effect which our reasonable doctrines may produce on the public mind, if they are suffered to be quietly professed, and to be associated before the eyes of the world with unmolested Christian worship. They will perhaps confess this dread, and call it a pious anxiety for the souls that may perish through heretical delusion. We should be disposed to give a different name to their feelings, if it were right to be very positive in describing the motives by which men are actuated. For those who are zealous members of the Established Church, we can make great allowance in these times. Their favorite institutions appear to be in some jeopardy; and *fear* is a passion which naturally makes men forget themselves. They know that Unitarians have always been amongst the most determined, consistent enemies, of all those encroachments which the Episcopal Establishment, in its present state, does undoubtedly make on the rights of conscience, on the purity and sincerity of religious profession, and on many of the best influences of Christian truth. They are

aware that we have ever been foremost in the ranks of the advocates of unqualified religious liberty, and a perfect equality of civil rights, to Catholics, Jews, and all the world besides. This they cannot forget; and now, when it has become evident that their monopolising church must undergo reformation, (which they call destruction,) it is natural for them to be more than usually fierce against the insidious and dangerous Unitarians. But for the conduct of the Calvinistic Dissenters, in this matter, we must acknowledge ourselves unable to find any decent apology. We had been led to regard them, apart from their peculiar theological errors, as a body of liberal and enlightened religionists. We have often felt no little respect and kindness awakened in our bosoms towards them, when we have struggled hand in hand together for the common principles of freedom and dissent. That in the way of ordinary theological opposition, in books and in sermons, they were accustomed to condemn both us and our opinions in no measured terms, we knew full well; and this we could have endured, without any material diminution of our regard for them as Christian brethren. But that *they* should repair to courts of law for the unhallowed assistance of earthly power, that *they* should attempt to introduce a system of bigoted exclusiveness and excommunication against Unitarians, has both surprised and grieved us deeply. It has caused us to entertain the painful apprehension, that true liberality of soul can never co-exist with a belief in the reputed orthodox system of faith. It must surely be, that some men belonging to this denomination are governed by a spirit, which the better part either do not approve, or do not understand? May repentance be given to the former, and penetration to the latter.

With respect to Unitarians themselves, we sincerely trust and believe, that this fresh out-bursting of popular dislike to their simple and heavenly faith, will have the effect of rendering them more courageous than ever in its defence. For what cause is it, that we are to be hunted out of the temples in which we assemble peacefully to worship the Almighty, according to the dictates of our consciences? Is it not solely, because in those temples we "worship the God of our fathers after the manner which men call heresy?" Why is it that our name is to be cast forth, as a pollution and a reproach

from every honourable and useful association of our fellow Christians,—from Bible Societies, from pious and charitable Trusts, from Institutions for the relief of orphan helplessness? Must we not be permitted to shew our religion in the apostolic method, by “visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction,” unless we will consent to shew it likewise in the Trinitarian method, by confessing our belief in the most unreasonable and unscriptural mysteries? Why is it that we are to be excluded from the pale of the Christian Church, from all fellowship of the spirit, even in works of general beneficence, with them that are called after the name of Jesus? Is it not merely, because in the exercise of that right of private judgment which every Protestant recognizes, we have arrived at the conclusion, that many popular views of the Gospel are false? that “the true and genuine Christian religion, is a plain, and honest, and disinterested thing, full of sweet candour and holy simplicity, hath no tricks in it, no designs upon any man, but only to make him wise and good, and so happy for ever.” Now, is it conceivable that any human opposition, however violent and vexatious, can ever induce us to abandon the open and zealous profession of these opinions? If, indeed, we could be guilty of such conduct, we should then prove that we had richly deserved all the condemnation which has been so unjustly directed against us. But as long as the Bible remains accessible to all men, we shall not cease to appeal to it in support of our belief in the unmystified unity and unmerited grace of God. These recent manifestations of hostility to our faith should cause us to reflect, and by reflecting, to feel in earnestness of heart, that it is no ordinary position which Divine Providence has appointed us to sustain, before the eyes of this generation. It is a happy, but yet a solemn privilege, to be called to bear our steady testimony, “through evil report,” to the *perfect reasonableness of Christianity*, in an age of the world when every thing which is not founded on reasonableness, however ancient it may be, is beginning to totter and give tokens of its speedy dissolution. If we be careful to acquit ourselves like men and like Christians, in these circumstances, it shall be well for us that

we have been tried. And may we not without presumption hope, that, through the wider diffusion of our sentiments, it shall be well also for the world? Let these "signs of the times," then, awaken us to greater seriousness and fervour in our profession of Unitarian Christianity. If we doubt its being the cause of God, and of human happiness, let us by all means examine it again. But if we have no such doubts, surely it is not all the railing and persecution which erring Christians can excite against us, that shall drive us from the strong holds of our faith. Let each of us once more take his Bible into his closet, and there, with an open mind and a serious heart, inquire whether the Father alone is to be worshipped as God; whether his Son, Jesus Christ, is his equal in eternal perfections, or his sanctified and glorified creature; whether the mercy of God to sinful men is free or purchased; whether little children are depraved by nature, the born-heirs of everlasting damnation, or so innocent, so free from every stain of sin, that "of such is the kingdom of heaven;" whether God has arbitrarily elected some to everlasting life, and condemned others to hopeless perdition, or left the way of salvation open to all who are willing to accept the proffered blessing, on the terms declared in the Gospel.

If we should discover that we have hitherto been wrong in our views of these things, let us mourn over the discovery in painful silence; for to rejoice in it, though it were truth, seems to be impossible. But if the result of our inquiries should be, that in all essential particulars we hold "the faith once delivered to the saints," let us tell our adversaries boldly, that we mean still to contend for and to proclaim this faith, though they should compel us to withdraw from our chapels to our house-tops;—and that even if they could, as in times of old, drive us from human habitations, we should still preach the free grace of God in "deserts and mountains," and should bow the knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in "dens and caves of the earth." The happiest event that could have befallen us, will be this renewed hostility to our doctrines, if by the mercy of God it shall bring us to feel, more adequately than we have heretofore done, the importance and the sacredness of the cause we have espoused. This has often been the good effect of per-

secution, in other instances: it may be so in our case. We are apt to value most of our possessions, according to what they have actually cost us, rather than according to their real worth. This may not be the dictate of perfect reason, but it seems to be the dictate of nature, and we cannot easily overcome it. When we have suffered reviling, or persecution of any kind, for the sake of a good principle, that principle is thereby endeared to us. The necessity we are put to of considering afresh the foundations of our belief, serves to convince us more strongly than ever that it is true, and we hold to it with greater confidence. What men, in the bitterness of their opposition, are pleased to say of the evil influence of our sentiments, obliges us to look more narrowly into them, to ask our own hearts what has been their influence on our dispositions and actions, to remember what fruits we have seen them produce in the lives of others;—and the sure consequence is, if they be right principles and worthy sentiments, that we cling to them with renewed fondness, energy, and zeal. If such should be the happy result of the efforts which Trinitarians are now directing against us, though we shall owe *them* no thanks, we shall have reason to praise Him who has made them his instruments for good. For ourselves, we can truly affirm that every year, every day, brings with it a new conviction to our minds, of the intrinsic power, beauty, and excellence of Unitarian Christianity; of its entire accordancé, in opposition to the Trinitarian scheme, with the true teaching of the Scriptures; and of the increasing readiness of mankind, in these times, to appreciate so simple and so glorious a religion, and under its benign influence to improve in all kinds of virtue and happiness. We should rejoice in almost any circumstances (however annoying for the time,) which might have the effect of putting it into the heart of ALL UNITARIANS to think and feel thus of the principles of their rational faith. Are there any among us who doubt and fear? Let them stand aside; for we give them warning, that a contest is at hand, in which, if there shall be more bigotry exhibited on the one side, there shall also, with God's blessing, be more energy, boldness, and activity, displayed on the other. And may the Divine Author of Truth speed the triumph of his own cause!



## THOUGHTS ON CREATION.

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IN the tempers and tastes of men there is an almost infinite variety ; but all are not equally amiable and worthy of indulgence. Some there are, the tenor of whose feelings is marked by fretfulness and discontent. They look upon the world as a scene which presents few materials for enjoyment, which offers them few opportunities of being happy. A cloudy day makes them miserable ; the frustration of some favorite scheme brings over their mind a deluge of sorrow. We might imagine that their minds were differently constituted from those of their fellows ; for they appear to have a strange and eager fancy for culling from every event of life something with which to wound their feelings, some bitter food for spleen and disappointment. The same circumstance which, on the view of its nature and tendency, would give satisfaction to another, spreads a gloom upon their cheek, and is noted with a sigh or a murmur ; so that, unless moved by some extraordinary, joyful excitement, unless attended by some unexampled success, they are seldom guilty of a smile or condescend to be happy. They resemble the hyper-critic whose eye is first for the faults, and is then directed, tardily and reluctantly, to the beauties of Nature and Art.

There are others, on whom natural beauty and grandeur produce no effect. Living in a world which displays an infinity of objects to excite rational curiosity, to gratify a refined taste, to touch the senses with pleasure, and to fill the bosom with emotion, they remain cold and untouched. The loveliness which another's eye beholds is by them unseen. The finest examples of creative power, the multiplied developments of creative wisdom and goodness scarcely weigh with any force upon their thoughts. They look around them with indifference—above them with the same indifference ; and beautiful indeed must be the beauty, and surpassing the grandeur, which warm them into admiration, or give utterance to the language of praise. That mysterious sympathy which the mind conceives for the works of nature, and which the lovely, the harmonious, the grand and the lofty, are continually awakening, is scarcely known by them, or if known, suffered to sleep till its vitality is lost.

And yet, upon a world which is regarded with such sour and discontented feelings by one party, and with such a culpable and disgraceful indifference by another, God himself looked with complacency. Creation, new and glowing, stood revealed to His gaze, and He contemplated it with satisfaction, for "behold it was very good." Chaos and Night had retired at his voice. Nature's varied and ever-varying beauties were disclosed. The new-born earth lay before him, a smiling and a happy scene, its valleys decked with the living green of herbs and plants, its savannahs stretching their undulating surfaces farther than the *human* eye could reach, its hills crowned with the waving forest, its mountains raising their lofty heads and pointing to the sky, its streams flowing onwards with gentle effort and blending their murmur with the music of the woods and groves, and its seas in tranquil majesty spreading forth their bosoms as a mirror for heaven. Animals of every tribe were essaying their new-found powers, soaring aloft upon the liquid air, or gamboling upon the green turf, or clustering together in the abysses of the ocean. And there was the first human pair in their bower of innocence, of a nature superior to the rest, of nobler form, and that form imbued with mind. They stood in their intellectual beauty the image of God, capable of appreciating his works and loving himself; whilst over all the Sun was pouring his meridian lustre, or the Moon and heavenly hosts were giving repose to life, and making "the night a fainter day." What a prospect unfolded itself before the Almighty Architect! Where darkness and confusion had held their desolating empire, light sprang up, and the lamp of life began to burn; there were new displays of creative energy, and new objects on which to turn the cares of Providence: vegetable and animal life order, beauty, and majesty; mind, in the dawn of its being, receiving its inspiration, and the empire over which it should rule—these grand results attended the fiat of Omnipotence "when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy;" and the mighty Creator was pleased with the work, for it approved itself to that wisdom by which the whole was designed.

And shall man presume to undervalue these astonishing displays of creative wisdom, or decline to read the charac-

ters of essential goodness which are inscribed upon them? Is it a proof of right feeling to treat any part of them with neglect and contempt?—of wisdom to resist their power of exciting pleasing and pious emotions?—of justice to scrutinize them with the sole purpose of discovering blemishes and defects? Though some men with a strange perversity close their hearts to the impressions which the works of God naturally produce, or open them only to those which are rather painful than the contrary, no extraordinary reasoning or eloquence is needful to convince us of their beauty and utility—to give us the same view of their character in which they appeared to the mind of the Creator himself. Nor is any extraordinary mental power or sensibility requisite to the discovery and appreciation of the marks of infinite goodness; they are around us and within us; our senses constantly bear witness to them; we move not a foot but we press upon them; we turn not the eye but it passes from host to host: so that a mind of the common standard is sufficiently gifted for the purpose of gaining a knowledge of the works of the Most High, and possesses sensibility enough to be inspired by them with wonder, admiration, and love.

Even to such a mind the union of beauty and use, by which the divine works are characterised, soon becomes evident. The beauty of natural objects is an almost endless theme. It is as various as the objects themselves. The beauty of a flower is not the beauty of a plant or tree, of a lawn or dell, of the stream or lake; nor can a strict comparison be instituted between it and these or other objects. Neither does beauty present the same unvarying feature, even in the race of flowers alone, for among them every variation of form and colour, every new combination, presents us with a new instance of beauty. We perceive, then, over what a wide empire beauty extends itself, rising from the microscopic loveliness of the vegetative tribes, through the whole number, spreading through the world of animated existence, and opening into that grandeur which is displayed in the highest and noblest works of God. And he is not to be envied who can look with unconcern on the splendid colouring, and the exquisite mechanism of a flower; in whose mind it excites little or no admiration, and who regards it as scarcely worthy the Creator's skill. That skill has manifested itself in giving life to the elements of beauty, and fixing them in a

countless variety of forms—minute or of magnitude—as the Creator approved; but it is the union of utility and beauty that seals His works with the impression of His goodness, and gives them a value in His estimation. But we cannot particularize this utility. Like its adjunct it is an almost infinite theme.

Every thing we behold is subservient to life. The flowers which smile in the garden; the verdant turf which covers the lawn and the meadow; the waving corn, the grove and the forest; the recesses of the rock, and the lofty heights of the mountain; the meandering stream, the glassy lake, and the immense ocean—all are instinct with life. Creatures of every kind feed upon them and among them; they find support, shelter, and security, suited to their wants, their form, and their habits. This is creation in its useful form. The elements of beauty might have been more widely spread; to the lovely and the grand might have been imparted characteristics of grace and glory more exquisite still, and the earth have been but a silent, barren memorial of creative beneficence; abounding with animal life, and this again drawing its sustenance from the many lovely objects amongst which it respires, it invests His creative energies with a higher character, and becomes vocal to His praise.

*(To be continued.)*

## GOD IN HIS WORKS.

*(From the "Sacred Offering.")*

OH when the peaceful arch of heaven is spread  
 In azure glory o'er me, and I raise  
 My eyes where starry wonders meet their gaze,  
 And tenderer beauty on the earth is shed;—  
 Or when the fair dawn wakens into life,  
 To tinge with brighter glow the mountain height,  
 And vales, and fields, and woodlands meet the sight,  
 In sunny pride, with heavenly radiance rife;—  
 Still my eye falls on beauty, still my heart  
 Feels the eternal goodness ever near,  
 Present in power and love and not one fear  
 Profanes the joy His perfect works impart  
 For though there come some sorrowing thoughts of dust,  
 They fade before that deep and blissful trust.

## HISTORY OF DISSENTING CHURCHES.

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(Continued from page 250.)

THE grounds on which the first Dissenters separated from the establishment were in their nature purely religious. They believed that the Episcopal church had not been sufficiently purified from the errors of Romanism ; — but that it enjoined the observance of rites and ceremonies which had no sanction in the authority of Revelation, and which in their tendency were opposed to the spiritual nature and simplicity of the religion of Christ. Such was the original state of the question between the Church and the Puritans : and it is at once interesting and instructive, to trace to their origin the changes which subsequently took place in the aspect of the controversy, and to perceive how, under new circumstances, the cause of religious liberty became one with that of civil freedom.

The period immediately succeeding that in which Dissent took its rise, was the epoch of the dawn of civil liberty in England. It was a period when the effects of a general, but insensible revolution of opinion with respect to Government, began to evince themselves. It was a period when men were becoming tenacious of their civil rights, and jealous of every encroachment of arbitrary power. It was the period of a struggle between the government and the governed ; the former endeavouring to maintain that absolute authority with which ages of barbarism had invested Monarchs ; the latter opposing every advance towards arbitrary government, and even wresting from the “ hand of unwilling power ” the rights which tyranny withheld from them. In such a state of things, the cause of the union of civil and religious liberty, will be apparent to every one who considers their mutual influence on each other.

The Sovereign in assuming a right to control the religious opinions of his subjects, *tacitly*, if not avowedly contends for a principle, which carried to its full extent must be destructive of every species of liberty. For it is evident, that, if the coercion of *religious* opinion be within the prerogative of royalty, — on the same principle, the Sovereign must have an equal right to control opinion on every other subject. No axiom, therefore, is more evident



than this,—that civil and religious liberty must stand or fall together. The one cannot exist where the other is wanting. Of these remarks the history of the periods to which we are referring affords a striking illustration. The Sovereigns who endeavoured to enforce a uniformity in the religion, also attempted to encroach on the civil rights of their subjects. The abettors of these measures were the Hierarchy and the Clergy,\* who inculcated the doctrines of the divine right of Kings and the passive obedience of the subject. The reasons also by which the kingly prerogatives were justified, were founded on the general principle, that the Sovereign, who possessed the right of governing by divine institution, alone had the power to decide all questions with respect either to the religion or government of the people. The coercion of religious freedom was, therefore, only one branch of a general system, which had for its object the establishment of absolute monarchy. The Star Chamber and High Commission Courts were only different means of attaining the same end. It was a general feeling produced by these circumstances, that the power against which they contended was the same, and that they had a common cause to support, which united the Puritans with the advocates of civil liberty, and caused the question of religious liberty to merge in the more general one of universal freedom. The struggle was not that of a party, but of a nation with its oppressors.

It was from such causes that the term "Puritan" became more extended in its application, and subsequently denoted, not only the religious party, but all those who resisted the encroachments of the crown on the liberties of the people. "The appellation Puritan," says Hume, (*Hist. Eng. c. 51.*) "stood for three parties. There were the political Puritans; the Puritans in discipline, who were averse to the ceremonies and episcopal government of the church; and the doctrinal Puritans (Calvinists) who rigidly defended the speculative system of the first Reformers." In estimating the character of the early Dissenters, it is necessary to keep in view the two-fold division of the Puritans, into a political and religious party. If this be not done, we are continually liable to

\* Hume c. 50.

be imposed upon by the misrepresentations and partial statements of writers, whose minds were too much inflamed by the spirit of party, to allow them much discrimination in the use of the terms by which they designated those who were opposed to them. And it is no less necessary to historical accuracy to observe, that the term Puritan, was applied not only to the leading parties among the Dissenters, but to numerous other sects, who nevertheless held few tenets in common either with Presbyterians or Independents. Of these sects some, such as the Fifth Monarchy men, were distinguished by the advocacy of the most absurd and enthusiastic notions. Yet from not attending to these very obvious distinctions, the charge of fanaticism, ignorance, and disloyalty, has been preferred against the Puritans, by Clarendon, Wood, and Walker, and sanctioned by later Historians, from whom we might anticipate a decision more consonant with the calmness and impartial scrutiny with which history contemplates the deeds of the past. Even Hume has fallen into this error,\* and has in too unqualified a manner, represented the Puritans as a visionary and fanatical party; and a host of writers of inferior note, following the beaten track, have so industriously circulated these loose and mistaken views of the early Dissenters, that the reader of English history generally rises from its perusal with the term "Puritan" associated in his mind only with hypocrisy, ignorance, and fanaticism.

The remarks which we have offered on the state of parties, will serve to suggest satisfactory replies to many of the allegations preferred against the early Dissenters, by their opponents in politics and religion. That some, even of the Presbyterians and Independents, in their opinions, and the language in which they expressed themselves, went beyond the limits which reason prescribes, is certain. It is almost what we should anticipate from men placed in such circumstances as they were, during the reign of Charles the First. The transactions of that eventful period were such as to call forth all the sterner feelings of human nature. And for this reason, we find the opinions of men of all parties, during these times, characterized by a severity of thought, and an in-

\* Hume, c. 40, Strype's Annals, Vol. 1., p. 416.

tensity of feeling on every subject, which, to those who have been placed in circumstances less pregnant with mighty consequences, appear extremes in thinking or acting which reason cannot justify. In such circumstances the philosophical observer will trace the causes of many events, which occur in the history of the Puritans. Nor can he be deemed to have a profound knowledge of human nature, and the springs of human action, who estimates the characters of men in those times by any ordinary standard. Yet we affirm that the Puritans, (we limit the application of the term,) cannot, as a body, be charged either with fanaticism or ignorance. The proofs of the *first* part of the assertion, are founded principally on the authority of Clarendon, Wood, and Walker, all of them zealous advocates of Episcopacy, and evincing throughout their writings an implacable hatred of the Puritans. In estimating the value of their testimony, therefore, we should not only consider it as proceeding from hostile pens, but also that these writers, and the church party generally, denominated all those Puritans who dissented from the Establishment. But the works of the Puritans afford the best criterion by which we are to judge of the justice of the charges preferred against them. The productions of Burroughs, of Calamy, of Baxter, and above all of Milton,\* afford the most ample refutation of these charges. From them we learn that the Puritan character was that of men of high principle, that they were serious but not fanatics; and above all there is pervading them a love of liberty, a regard to the sacred rights of conscience, which, as we peruse them, inspire us with kindred sentiments to those which are called forth by the perusal of Greece and Rome's immortal patriots.† The charge of ignorance our limits do not permit us at large to discuss—nor is it necessary. The works of the Puritans themselves contain the best refutation of it;---and they will descend to future generations, at once imperishable monuments of the true greatness of the minds which produced

\* An excellent Edition of the Prose Works of Milton has lately been published by Mr. Fletcher.

† See Neal's Hist. Pur. Vol. 4, p. 369.

them,—and the best evidence that the assertions of their opponents to the contrary are little less than calumnious misrepresentations.

We trust that enough has been urged to evince the true character of the early Dissenters. That there are defects in that character we do not deny. For these "*darker traits*," which are principally found to exist in the Puritans of Charles the First's reign,—the circumstances in which they were placed, the cruelty and persecution which they experienced, will be an extenuation, if they do not form an apology. At the same time we assert that these defects have been multiplied and exaggerated,—that gravity of thought has by their enemies been held forth as fanaticism, and that profound views have not unfrequently been mistaken for visionary schemes. But we repeat that it is to the works of the Puritans that we must refer in order to gain a clearer insight into their principles. In them is practically exemplified the remark of Longinus, that "*Liberty is the nurse of Genius*." For in them we have a flow of deep-toned thought, expressed with a variety and fervid eloquence of diction, which enrich while they raise our minds even to the sublime. The works, as well as the noble spirits who produced them, have been depreciated;—and these misrepresentations had their end, they served to fix an unmerited stigma on the Dissenter, and to cause the productions of the Puritan to lie unread, neglected, and despised. That day is passing when men suffer their minds to be prejudiced, and themselves to be imposed upon by such misrepresentations; and we believe the time is not far distant when many of the productions of these "*Martyrs of liberty and of the rights of conscience*" will be appealed to as among the noblest specimens of English Classic Literature.\*

Such then were the Puritans;—men of high principle, who nobly sacrificed every worldly prospect at the shrine of Liberty and Religion. With every Englishman their memory ought to be hallowed. For, "*by them alone the precious spark of liberty was kindled*" and preserved. To them England owes the whole freedom of her constitution. They present, as the advocates of freedom, one of the sublimest moral spectacles which the world ever beheld.

\* Mr. (now Lord) Brougham, in his Inaugural Discourse, delivered before the University of Glasgow, in 1825, recommends the perusal of the works of the Puritans (with others,) to the Student of Glasgow.

held. Throughout the whole circle of their history, from their rise in the reign of Elizabeth to the Restoration, we find them the consistent, firm defenders, of civil and religious freedom. Devoting themselves with a holy ardour to the sacred cause of man's rights, they have bequeathed to posterity a glorious inheritance ;—one which *we*, unless we have degenerated from our Sires, shall be careful to transmit to coming generations yet more perfected.

## THOUGHTS ON THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

SIR,—In a former paper on this creed some remarks were offered on paragraphs relating to the equality of Jesus Christ with Almighty God, and on Christ's Divinity ; the following are on the Holy Ghost—his Personality and Equality.

Let us, then, first consider, in what sense the words "Holy Ghost," or "Spirit," are used in some passages in the Scriptures, and from which we think it will be found impossible to believe they relate to a *Person* :—Secondly, to consider some other passages which are supposed to prove the existence of a *Person* :—and Thirdly, to consider the *general* language of scripture on this subject ; and how far such an assertion as this is warranted—"there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost."

1.—The words Holy Ghost, or Spirit, are used in various senses, under different circumstances ;—sometimes the term Holy Ghost is meant for God himself—sometimes it represents a gift—at others a grace—and at others a qualification.

We prove the assertion that the term Holy Ghost is meant for God himself, from such passages as these :—Psalm cxxxix, v. 7.—The writer is asserting the omniscience and omnipresence of Jehovah.—"Whither shall I go from *thy spirit* or whither shall I flee from *thy presence*." v. 14. "I will praise thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well."

We prove the Holy Ghost to be a gift by which those Apostles on whom it was conferred (and we may, perhaps,



say others of the primitive christians) were enabled to perform miracles, and with whom it constantly abided, after the day of Pentecost, (although they were separated,) from such language as this ;—Acts ii. v. 38. “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the *gift* of the Holy Ghost.”

We prove it to be a grace inasmuch as it is styled “the spirit of truth”—which was to guide the disciples unto all truth. John xvi. v. 13.

Lastly, we prove it to be a qualification, from the fact of all those on whom it was “shed” or “poured out,” or to whom it was “given,” possessing powers which they did not possess before, by which they were qualified and enabled to raise the dead, cure the sick, and feed the hungry ; and to speak languages which they would otherwise have been incapable of speaking.

2. Our Trinitarian brethren say that when the Holy Ghost is grieved, when he maketh intercession for the Saints according to the will of God, when the Holy Ghost is blasphemed, when he is called a Comforter, sent from God by Jesus Christ, and many other passages of a like description, such acts can alone be understood as belonging to a person. We say, that though such language is used it does not necessarily mean actual personality. For if we allow it in this case, we must allow it of other qualities, such as Charity, Wisdom, Sin, and Death. Prov. c ix, v. 1. “Wisdom hath builded her house,” &c. 1 Cor. xiii, v. 4. “Charity suffereth long, and is kind.” Rom. vi, v. 14. “For Sin shall not have dominion over you.” 1 Cor. xv, v. 26. “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death.” We contend, therefore, that the Eastern idiom, and the peculiar circumstances under which such language was written, should be fully borne in mind ; and we are certain that then the very few passages appearing to favour this hypothesis must lose their apparent value, when compared with the mass of evidence which can be adduced in favour of our assertion, that the “spirit of God” is sometimes meant for God himself, or emanations and influences from him.

3. Having considered in what various senses the term Holy Ghost or Spirit is used in Scripture, and shown that although the term is personified, which a casual ob-

server may consider conclusive, still there are other qualities and virtues which are also personified, and thereby destroy this argument for the personality of the Spirit, we shall now consider more largely the true meaning and intent of the words.

What, then, could have been the meaning of the Psalmist when he wrote the beautiful passage, part of which is quoted above, but that he was expressing his belief in, and glorifying the Almighty as, the sole Maker and Preserver of the whole universe? In fact, to suppose that a Jew could for a moment have believed in, or had intended to address, any other Being than that One true God, is to suppose that he paid as little respect to the first and greatest of all the commandments, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me;" as some persons in this our day, who worship "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God." The Psalmist had evidently been well taught in all the commandments, and it is charging him with that which we have no reason to suppose he practiced; viz. worshipping "God the Holy Ghost," respecting whom he never had had any command. But when he expressed himself in such a manner, can we not fully enter into his meaning? But should there be any doubt, let us compare it with another sublime passage, where speaking of the unity of God, the writer says,—Psalm lxxxvi. v. 8 and 10.---"Among the Gods there is none like thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things; thou art God alone." From a comparison of these passages, it appears that David ascribes to the Spirit---and to God alone---the power of creating works of wonder, and leaves not a doubt on the mind that by the Spirit he meant the Lord his God.

What this Holy Spirit was, we shall now show from the words of Scripture, compared with passages supposed to prove its personality; and we shall then be able to judge if it *could* possibly have been a *person*. Acts. ii. v. 2,3,4. "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire, and it sat upon them; and they were all *filled* with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts x, v. 47., "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised which have *received* the Holy Ghost as well as we." Acts ii. v. 38., "And ye shall *receive* the *gift* of the Holy Ghost." This then was the Holy Ghost, and by it those were enabled to perform "miracles, signs, and wonders," to whom God had *given* it. There is nothing said of a person; but the Apostles were *filled* with that which could be nothing more than an emanation of divine energy and power from God, and which was imparted for the express purpose that they should be enabled to go into all nations, and proclaim the new covenant of Jesus Christ, the chosen, anointed, and commissioned Son of God. There are persons who *are* to receive the Holy Ghost, after they have been baptised. There are also persons who *have* received the Holy Ghost, as well as the Apostles. What, we would ask, could they have received in the shape of a person? Nothing. But what a consolation and support, and holy joy, and peace of mind which passeth all understanding, could they not have experienced by receiving the influences, and living and acting under the operations, of God's *manifested* love towards them. Truly may it be said of them, that they were become *new* creatures.

There is a passage which is thought to support the doctrine of the personality of the Holy Ghost, on which it will be necessary to offer some brief remarks. Matthew, xxviii. v 19. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now if Trinitarians mean to say that baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, proves these three persons to be all equal in power, glory, and eternity, if they assert this, we will (for the sake of argument, and that alone) grant the assumption; and what follows! We then call upon them to be consistent, and answer the facts which arise out of such passages as state that the Jews were baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and that converts to Christianity were baptised unto John's baptism. We affirm, that if baptising in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, prove each of these Beings to be divine, we must ascribe also to Moses and John the same divinity, as persons were baptised unto them, or into them. But who ever supposed that John and Moses *were* divine; they were

divinely *commissioned* undoubtedly, and therefore had power to baptise; but they were not divine. But that this language could be used, and was used often, in speaking of more persons than Jehovah, in a secondary sense, is plain, and might, perhaps, have been so used here;—take for example the following:—“And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their Fathers, and bowed down their heads, and *worshipped* the Lord and the King.”—1 Chron. xxix. v. 20. Now who would ever think the writer of this passage meant to assert that the Jewish nation paid religious adoration to the King, in the same sense as to the Lord God of their Fathers? The idea is preposterous. “And all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.”—1 Sam. xii. v. 18. Who will say the people had an equal fear of Samuel as of God? or who will dare to insinuate that because the Lord God and the King, and the Lord and Samuel, are here coupled together, that these two men were divine? Yet the argument will hold good in this case if that of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be allowed. In conclusion let us remember, that if the personality of the Holy Ghost be proved, he is decidedly inferior to Almighty God, at least so we must conclude, when we consider some of the above quoted passages. *God gave* the Holy Ghost. Jesus prayed the Father to *send* the Comforter, the Holy Ghost. When the Spirit of Truth should come he would *not speak of himself*. From these, and other passages of a like import, we say there could be no occasion for such language, had the Holy Ghost been God, equal with the Father.

EXAMINER.

## “THE THREE WITNESSES.”

### REMARKS ON

#### 1 JOHN, Chap. v. Verses 1—8.

V. 1. “WHOSOEVER believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”

At the conclusion of the preceding chapter, the Apostle John inculcates the necessity of joining the love of the Christian Brother to the love of God;—in this place he shews who our christian brother is, namely, every one that

"believeth that Jesus is the Christ." The Apostle next tells us how we may know that we are actuated by a true, and not a false love to the brethren.

V. 2. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments."

It is not sufficient that we love the brethren from natural affection, or worldly interest, but our love of christians is then only true, when it proceeds from a love of God as their Father, or from a desire to "keep his commandments."

V. 3, 4. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcome the world, *even* our faith."

The love of God is so powerful a principle that it enables us not only to love the brethren, but also to triumph over the temptations of the world. By the *world* I understand here, those seducing vices and paralyzing terrors of Idolatry and Superstition, by which so large a portion of mankind were then held in bondage. It was he alone who was "born of God," in other words, who was converted to the Gospel, that obtained a victory over the temptations and fears which such a world presented.

V. 5. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Here the Apostle challenges all other professors of religion, to display so powerful a principle as that which enabled persons to overcome the world. Jews and Gentiles, and even the false Teachers, to whom he often alludes, may boast of their being able to conquer the world, but none are found to do this effectually except such as believe that Jesus is the "Son of God." Does the Apostle declare that it is quite sufficient to believe Jesus to be THE SON OF GOD? Then vain are the threats and the anathemas of those in modern times, who unblushingly tell us, we must believe Jesus to be God, before we can have the true faith, or be saved. Let us pity such imbecility, if it be not something worse. The Apostle *John* expressly tells us here, that *that* faith is true, which confesses Jesus to be "the Son of God."

V. 6. "This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.



And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."

To come by *water* and *blood* seems here, in reference to the divine mission of Christ, of which the Apostle is speaking, to signify that Christ had the most signal testimonies to his having been sent from God. The *first* of these testimonies was by *water*, or at his *Baptism*, when a voice from God declared him to be his "beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased." The second was by *Blood*; referring unquestionably, I think, to the testimony which Jesus had of the divinity of his mission, about the time his blood was shed on the cross,—such as the supernatural darkness, and the earthquake, and the rending of the veil of the temple; including perhaps also the testimony connected with his Resurrection shortly after. It is added, "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." Besides the circumstances attending his *Baptism* and *Death*, here called the *Water* and the *Blood*, there is another testimony to the divine mission of Jesus; it is the *Spirit of Truth*,—alluding to that divine Spirit which enabled Jesus to work miracles while he was on earth, and which, after his ascension, he abundantly poured forth on his Disciples.

The whole that has been now considered may be thus connected:--

In the first five verses the Apostle John sets forth the glorious effects of the Gospel Faith---that it enabled the Christian cheerfully to keep God's commandments, and especially that of loving the brethren, and to overcome the peculiar obstacles which the world then presented to the reception of the Christian faith, as well as to a perseverance in the same when once cordially embraced. Then in the sixth verse he proceeds to state the *testimonies* on which this pre-eminently powerful faith is founded. "This is he who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." In other words, there is abundant testimony of Christ's divine mission; for God proclaimed it by a voice from heaven at his baptism, and he himself shed his blood upon the cross in attestation of the same thing; and miraculous powers were conferred upon him, and through him upon the Disciples, and those powers evince heavenly truth.

V. 7. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one."

V. 8. "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."

In one thing, or one in consent of testimony; for it is of TESTIMONY that the Apostle is speaking, though some persons, *without the slightest regard* to the context, and in the most plainly direct violation of it, adduce this passage as a scriptural proof of a *trinity of persons* in the Godhead, I find that the celebrated Beza interprets this passage not as alluding to one God but to *one testimony*. These are his words:—"These three are one IN CONSENT." Afterwards he says, "*concerning their unity in substance, that, as it appears to me, IS NOT TREATED OF IN THIS PLACE!*" And what is Calvin's interpretation? The following is, I believe, a faithful translation of his words. "*When he says these three are one, HE REFERS NOT TO THEIR ESSENCE, BUT RATHER TO THEIR CONSENT.*" And he adds further on, "*there is no doubt but that the Father, word, and spirit are said to be one, in the same sense, in which it is afterwards said, that the blood and water and spirit, are one!!*" A noble concession this, on the part of the Genevan Reformer. "Great is the truth and it WILL prevail."

Such, unquestionably, is the meaning of these verses, supposing they are all genuine, that is, the writing of the Apostle John. But there are the strongest reasons to conclude that these words (*in heaven, the Father, the word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth,*) were inserted in this place many years after the Apostle's death, by some unknown hand; and therefore that they form *no part of the true canon of the Scriptures*, and ought to be left out of the Bible. I do not affirm this because I think the passage militates against my creed, by proving a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, for it bears not the *remotest allusion* to that tenet; but because it is *not genuine, it was never written by the Apostle*. According to all the ancient Greek manuscripts and all the ancient Versions, the 7th and 8th verses contain no more than the following words: "For there are three that bear record, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in

one." The sense, too, is perfectly complete with this reading, for the Apostle's object is to produce certain testimonies to Jesus being the Son of God, or as we should say, to his divine authority. He enumerates three,—the Spirit, or testimony of miracles; the water, or the testimony of the heavenly voice at his baptism; and the blood, or the testimony arising from his death and resurrection. These are represented as being remarkable witnesses, and perfectly agreeing in testifying *one* and the same thing, namely, *not* that Jesus was *God*, but the Christ, the Son of God. I will add one remark more. Why did the Apostle select only three witnesses, when there were many others, in order to prove that Jesus was the Son of God? the answer is, because he was educated a Jew, and because he was writing more immediately for the benefit of some of his gainsaying brethren, who, according to their law, required two or three witnesses to establish any important fact. They received nothing as fact without at least *two* witnesses; and if three were procured, that would be looked upon as *indubitable* testimony.

D.

POEMS, chiefly Religious. By the Rev. H. F. Lyte, M.A.

London: James Nisbet, Berner's-street, and W. Marsh.

Oxford-street. 18mo. pp. 166.

Mr. Lyte, the author of this very pleasing little volume, is a Clergyman, at Brixham, in Devonshire;—a gentleman with whom, in the days of the late Catholic-emancipation struggle, we were wont to come frequently into contact. He was an indomitable and vehement opponent of the famous relief bill; and the County of Devon has often witnessed his exhibitions of Protestant zeal. We are most happy to meet him here, in a character which, we are sure, is far more congenial to his own tastes, and one for which he appears to us to be much better fitted. We have seldom met with a volume of so much

merit, united with so little pretension. We extract the piece entitled "Evening,"—assuring our readers that it is not the best. We would particularly refer to "The Infant's Address to departing Day-Light," which is extremely beautiful, but too long for our pages.—

### EVENING.

SWEET Evening hour ! sweet evening hour  
That calms the air, and shuts the flower ;  
That brings the wild bee to his nest,  
The infant to its mother's breast.

Sweet hour that bids the labourer cease ;  
That gives the weary team release,  
And leads them home, and crowns them there  
With rest and shelter, food and care.

O season of soft sounds and hues,  
Of twilight walks among the dews,  
Of feelings calm, and converse sweet,  
And thoughts too shadowy to repeat.

The weeping eye that loathes the day,  
Finds peace beneath thy soothing sway ;  
And faith and prayer, o'ermastering grief,  
Burst forth, and bring the heart relief.

Yes, lovely hour ! thou art the time  
When feelings flow, and wishes climb ;  
When timid souls begin to dare,  
And God receives and answers prayer.

Then trembling through the dewy skies  
Look out the stars, like thoughtful eyes  
Of angels, calm reclining there,  
And gazing on this world of care.

Then as the earth recedes from sight,  
Heaven seems to ope her fields of light,  
And call the fettered soul above,  
From sin and grief, to peace and love.

Sweet hour ! for heavenly musing made—  
When Isaac walked, and Daniel prayed ;  
When Abram's offering God did own ;  
And Jesus loved to be alone.

Who has not felt that Evening's hour  
Draws forth devotion's tenderest power ;  
That guardian spirits round us stand,  
And God himself seems most at hand ?

The very birds cry shame on men,  
And chide their selfish silence, then :  
The flowers on high their incense send ;  
And earth and heaven unite and blend.

Let others hail the rising day :  
I praise it when it fades away ;  
When life assumes a higher tone,  
And God and heaven are all my own.

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“ A LETTER to the Vice-Chancellor of England, in Reply to his Honour's Remarks relative to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, delivered Dec. 23, 1833, in Pronouncing his Judgment in the Case of the Attorney-General, v. Shore and Others. By James Yates, M. A., Secretary to the British and Foreign Unitarian-Association.” London : Sold by R. Hunter.

THIS pamphlet may be considered as the official reply of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association to the recent attacks of the Vice-Chancellor. Mr. Yates is the Secretary of the Association, and was instructed by the



Committee to prepare this answer to the learned Judge's animadversions. Mr. Yates is also, fortunately, the very man whose talents and attainments made him exactly the person to undertake such a task. He is a calm and clear reasoner, and his acquirements in true Biblical scholarship, compared with those of his Honour, are as nearly as we can determine in about the proportion of the Atlantic to a fish-pond. They who wish therefore to see the Vice-Chancellor's criticisms on the Improved Version well exposed, cannot do better than read this pamphlet. The author does not enter at all into the question respecting the equity of the decision in the case of Lady Hewley's Trustees, but confines himself to the Judge's strictures on the translation of the New Testament. Our limits will not allow us to give any thing like an analysis of the more important contents of this "Letter;" but there are one or two curious facts disclosed by it, which we shall state for the benefit of such of our readers as may not chance to see the "Letter" itself.

The first of these, is, that in the Speech of the Vice-Chancellor, as *published* in a pamphlet, since the decision was given, there is inserted a specimen of his Honour's Biblical knowledge, *which never was uttered in the delivery of the speech.*

"On comparing the preceding account of the latter and by far the greater part of Your Honour's Judgment, with the report of it, to which I have above referred, as printed by your permission, and, according to an anonymous writer in the "Times" of January 8th, with the benefit of your correction, I find a passage introduced, of which I took no note, and have no recollection, viz. the remarks in p. 16, on the introductory chapters of Matthew and Luke. As Your Honour, to the best of my remembrance, did not make those remarks, and certainly did not lay any stress upon them, I shall not attempt any reply to them."

The authorised report, to which Mr. Y. alludes, was published with the paltry title of the "Unitarians Defeated," and is said expressly, in the title-page, to have been published "with the Vice-Chancellor's permission;"—there seems no doubt that he himself corrected and prepared it for the press. This was bad enough, in a grave Judge, who had already wandered so far out of his course to indulge the world with a display of his theological learning;—but in the printed report to insert an entirely new spe-

cimen of his critical talents, ("Oh! Oh!" as they say in the House of Commons,) this was too bad. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

The other curiosity relates to the theological accomplishments of Sir Edward Sugden, who was leading counsel for the prosecuting party.

"Sir Edward Sugden, in his able speech on behalf of the relators, endeavoured to point out the dangers and dreadful consequences of encouraging this "liberty of prophesying" among private persons. At the same time, I could not help being struck with his own statement of the orthodox doctrine of the Deity and incarnation of Christ, a statement which he made with the utmost solemnity of countenance, voice, and manner. It was as follows: that God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, became man, and having exhibited Divine power by working miracles, having suffered on the cross, and done all that was necessary for the salvation of mankind by paying the price of their redemption, *then became God again*. Such was Sir Edward Sugden's statement upon this awful subject. Whether he had received a lesson in divinity from the relators' solicitor, or whether these were the recollections of the nursery, I cannot tell. But it is certain that Sir Edward's statement was more like a story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* than anything that was ever pretended to be Christian. I cannot even find that any of the ancient heretics in the second and following centuries held such an opinion."

"Like master like man." The Judge and the Counsel were equally at home on these subjects. When we said, in our observations on this case in the last number of the *Gospel Advocate*,—"it is to be hoped that Barristers will make haste and diligently pursue their new studies, that they may acquit themselves more creditably than the Vice-Chancellor has done,"—we had no reason to think that the necessity for such a preparation had been so strikingly evinced in the case of the first Chancery Barrister of the day. "*Then became God again!*"

We cannot refrain from giving Mr. Yates's very admirable remarks elicited by this instance of the state of religious knowledge amongst the eminent men of our day and country.

"Was ever religion treated with greater insult and mockery than it is now in England? A system is forced upon the clergy and upon the people by Acts of Parliament, so mysterious, so remote from all practical applications, so teeming over with contradiction and absurdity, that almost any sensible member of either branch of the legislature would be sorry to be supposed really and cordially to assent to it; and at the same time a public anathema is commanded to be pronounced in the religious services of the Lord's Day upon those who do not keep it "whole

and undefiled," and who are, moreover, compelled to pay dearly for the privilege of being thus cursed by their neighbours and relations ; and yet the most learned and able men in the country, who are put forward to be its advocates, and who in Parliament would have protested against the slightest alteration of it, do not at all know what it is, and, when they attempt to state it, fall into the most ridiculous blunders. Is it then to be endured, that, when we talk of Church Reform, we should aim at reforming the Church only so as 'to save our pockets, and not with a view to make religion more respected, the Church of England more comprehensive, its laity better informed, more charitable, and more moral, and its clergy more sincere, more rational, and more free ?'

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

*Opening of Parliament.*—Since our last publication, the Parliament has again assembled ; and the Speech from the Throne has,—not revealed,—but hidden and mystified those intentions of the government in which our readers, as such, are most likely to feel interested. We are sorry it is not in our power to announce what degree of *Church Reform* the public may expect, or whether any at all is to be attempted. His Majesty's Ministers are silent on these matters. Does the true art of governing in England, at the present day, consist in managing parties, or in satisfying the public ? We should have supposed the latter method would be likely to prove most successful.

The inference we are compelled to draw from this reserved manner of the King's Ministers, is certainly not favourable to our hopes. We suspect that the true reason why the government have not explained their designs of *Church Reform*, is, that they have no such designs to explain. It is probable that the anticipated opposition of the Peers, including the Bishops, and of the High Church party throughout the country, seems to the government to be greater than they are prepared to encounter. They, perhaps, foresee that any such undertaking would oblige them again to throw themselves on the support of popular opinion, to a degree which they have no taste for, after the bitter taunts and rebukes to which they were exposed on that point, in the case of Parliamentary Reform. We shall most likely witness some endeavours, some feeble measures of legislation, to mitigate the abuse of pluralities. It is also likely that some method will be proposed for augmenting the incomes of small ecclesiastical livings, with as little diminution as possible of those which are richest,—a very delicate business to manage, un-

doubtedly. But we fear that any expectation of seeing the government go thoroughly into the business of Church Reform, with a determination to remodel the Institution in accordance with the existing state of public opinion on the subject, must be considered exceedingly remote;—unless some new circumstances should arise to urge the work of reformation forwards. From some hints dropped by one of the Ministers, in Parliament, we infer that difficulties are occasioned by a conflict of opinions in the Cabinet respecting the *sacredness* of the present *appropriation* of Church property.

*Dissenters' Grievances.*—We are nearly as much in the dark on this subject, as on Church Reform, but not quite. One to whom Dissenters already owe much respect and gratitude,—Lord John Russell,—has given notice of motions for some alterations in the state of the marriage laws, and in the system of parochial registration, with a view to the relief of Dissenters. What the precise nature of his intended alterations may be, we are of course not able to say. We expect it will be proposed to make it obligatory on the Clergy to register the births, marriages, and burials of Dissenters, without the necessity of the latter submitting to the religious ceremonies of the Church,—but still, on payment of the usual fees. Many Dissenters, however, will feel it objectionable to be compelled to go to the Church and the Clergy for purposes of this kind. But we must wait for further information respecting the plans of government. On the subject of the liability of Dissenters to the payment of Church Rates, there is notice of a motion made by Mr. Divett, the very able and consistent Member for Exeter, which is to come on early in March. This is one of the heaviest of our grievances; and we trust the honourable member will be strongly supported, as we know his liberal views entitle him to support. In regard to opening the Universities to Dissenters, by the abolition of all oaths and subscriptions which they cannot submit to, there seems to be little prospect of success at present. Several attempts of this kind have been made by enlightened Churchmen, in the University of Cambridge, but have met with signal defeat. Where is the fulfilment of Lord Althorp's promise, (made on occasion of Mr. Tooke's motion, in July last,) that something should be done towards giving the London University the power of bestowing learned degrees? This ought not to be lost sight of, as it would in part, though by no means entirely, remove the grievance.

*Tithes.*—Nothing has yet been announced concerning the

plans of government on the subject of Tithes, as far as relates to England. Some mode of commutation will undoubtedly soon be proposed. In reference to Irish Tithes, the government have found their laws again utterly fruitless; and it is now intended to collect them in the shape of a land-tax, to be paid by the proprietors, not by the cultivators, of the soil. In the debates on this question, there were some bold truths uttered in Parliament, on the subject of the original and just appropriation of Tithes, which we were much pleased to see reported. The following extract is from the speech of Mr. C. Fergusson on that occasion:—

“ He should like to know who, at present, were entitled to the Tithes? The landlord had no more right to the tithe than he had to the produce of the land of any other gentleman in the kingdom. The landlord who thought of pocketing any part of the tithe money, meditated what could not be otherwise than a direct robbery. The honourable and learned member for Dublin had stated his willingness that one-third of the amount of the tithe should be preserved, not for the Clergy of Ireland, but for a purpose which undoubtedly had been originally contemplated in their institution,—namely, *towards the relief of the poor and the purposes of education*. To such a dedication of part of the tithes, either in England or Ireland, he (Mr. F.) never would object, provided there was found to be an excess over what was necessary for the due maintenance of the Clergy. Not only was that a part of the original intention of tithes, but for a considerable period the practice prevailed among the faithful of the Christian Church; and if it could be restored to a certain degree, it would be most desirable. There was nothing in the present resolution to bind any one as to the *appropriation of tithes*.”

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## PLYMOUTH PETITION TO PARLIAMENT ON DISSENTERS' GRIEVANCES.

*To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament Assembled.*

The Petition of the Minister and Members of the Congregation of Unitarian Dissenters assembling for Public Worship in Plymouth.

SHEWETH,

That the attachment of your Petitioners to those just and free principles of Government which placed the House of Brunswick on



the Throne, is too well known to require any comment ; but your Petitioners, nevertheless, labour under grievances and disqualifications which are both impolitic and unjust, and in petitioning your Honourable House for the removal of them, your Petitioners would merely ask for what has so often been conceded to them in theory, but which your Honourable House has happily, at length, in its Reformed state, the power of carrying into practice, that the blessings of the Constitution under which your Petitioners live, shall be extended without distinction to all, and that the attachment to the State of all its subjects shall be rivetted by that which can alone consecrate and confirm attachment—an equal participation in all the rights and privileges of the land.

Your Petitioners claim, as an inalienable right, the liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, unshackled by the Creeds or interference of any human authority, whether derived from Councils, Convocations or Presbyteries, or from Papal, or Kingly, or Parliamentary sources, and your Petitioners consider it most unjust and unholy to take by the strong hand of power the property of any Man under the pretence of supporting any systems of Religion, and more particularly to take the property of Dissenters and apply it to the support of a system which they believe to be unscriptural. Your Petitioners therefore wish most entirely to disclaim any desire to share in the emoluments of the Church, for the support of their own Ministers or places of Worship, but they do most strongly object to their being obliged to contribute towards the support of a Church Establishment, from which, as such, they derive no benefit nor advantage whatever, and the Union of which with the State, they consider injurious to christianity. Your Petitioners have abstained from entering into the excitement and disturbance, now prevailing in many Parishes, from the refusal to grant, and the resistance to pay Church rates ; confiding in the equity of your Honourable House to extend to them, what has already been conceded to the Irish Dissenters of the Roman Catholic persuasion, an exemption from the payment of them. Your Petitioners also hope that a Measure for the Commutation of Tithes will be introduced, and that your Honourable House will, in its wisdom, soon see fit to appropriate them for the education and moral improvement of the People at large.

Your Petitioners also complain of the refusal to admit them into the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and to an equal eligibility to all their offices of dignity and emolument. The Legislature has already interfered with the management of these Establishments by transferring it from Roman Catholic to Protestant hands, and your Petitioners now seek admission into them on the ground of their being National property, from which no class of His Majesty's subjects should be excluded, by their inability to subscribe to certain Articles of faith drawn up in times of comparative darkness and barbarism. In consequence of their exclusion from the Universities, Dissenters are subject to another grievance, being unable to practice in the Admiralty and Ecclesiastical Courts of Justice. Your Petitioners hope, that if your Honourable House should consider subscriptions to Creeds or Oaths necessary in any case at either of the Universities, they will be confined to Students wishing to enter the Church.

Your Petitioners also complain of the want of a General System of Registration for Births, Marriages, Deaths, and Wills. The imperfect mode of keeping the Registers of this Country being a disgrace to any civilized community, and equally prejudicial to the rights and interests of all classes of His Majesty's subjects, whether Dissenters or Churchmen.

Your Petitioners also claim to be allowed to celebrate their Marriages, according to their own religious belief, by their own Ministers. Compelling them to submit to the service of the Established Church from which they conscientiously differ, is a desecration of the Religious character of the ceremony, an insult to themselves, and to the Minister who is compelled to officiate. Your Petitioners only recognise a power in the State to register and authenticate their Marriages when once contracted.

As parochial Burial Grounds are Public property, your Petitioners consider themselves entitled to use them, their own Ministers officiating.

Your Petitioners respectfully solicit the attentive consideration of your Honourable House to their grievances, and look with full confidence to the Reformed House of Commons, believing that it will be guided by principle and justice alone, in legislating for all classes of the community, and not disposed to sanction the continuance of a system of monopoly and exclusion, for the benefit of one portion of His Majesty's subjects, at the expense, and to the injury of another; a system introduced and continued during ages of mis-government, for purposes of private and party aggrandizement. Your Petitioners hope it is now only necessary for their grievances to be known to be relieved, and they rely on the justice of your Honourable House to place them on an equal footing with the rest of their fellow subjects.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

## INTELLIGENCE.

The Quarterly Meeting of the Unitarian Ministers in South Wales, was held on Wednesday, Dec. 25th, 1833, at Llandyfaen, Carmarthenshire; the Rev. B. Philips, of St. Clear's, performed the devotional part of the Service, and the Rev. J. James, of Gelliforhon, preached from 2d Cor. x. 17.—“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” The number of people assembled together on the occasion, was considered to be near 400. Immediately after the conclusion of the Service, followed a very interesting discussion of a question proposed at the last Meeting. The Rev. J. Jones, of Aberdare, preached in the evening of the same day, and the Rev. John Jones, of Bridgend, preached in the afternoon of the preceding Tuesday.

The next Meeting is to be held at Swansea, on the first Wednesday and Thursday after Easter Sunday.

On Sunday, January 6th, a Congregational Meeting of the Unitarian Society, was held at the Unitarian Chapel, in Yeovil. The object of this Meeting was, to lay before the Members of the Congregation the state of the Society during the past year, and

particularly to draw their attention, and that of the public generally, to the plans that had been adopted, with the view of promoting the cause of rational religion, and of furthering the interests of the Society.

After an introductory prayer, the report was read. It represented the affairs of the Society, and its prospects, as being highly cheering. The attendance on the regular services in the Chapel, has considerably increased. The Library connected with the Society was also represented as being well supported, not only by those immediately connected with the Chapel, but by others.

The Sunday School has been much improved ; a new system of instruction, recommended by the Minister, has lately been introduced and followed with almost complete success. A course of Lectures on the principal doctrines of Natural and Revealed Religion, are also being delivered by the Minister, which promise to effect much good. After the delivery of a Lecture, the auditors are at liberty to propose or discuss any question connected with the subject of the Lecture.

Immediately ensuing the Evening Service, the Minister before a large Congregation, awarded prizes to those children who had distinguished themselves during the past year.

From the favourable impression made by the proceedings of the day, on the minds even of those not connected with the Society, it is hoped that much good will accrue, and we trust that the commencement of each year will be observed by the holding of such a Meeting, calculated as it is to excite the zeal of *professed* Unitarians, and to obliterate that spirit of prejudice entertained against them.

H. H.

Yeovil, 22d January, 1834.

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A Meeting of the Somerset and Dorset half yearly Association, will take place at Ilminster, on Good Friday, March 28. The Rev. W. James, of Bridgwater, is engaged to preach on the occasion.

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#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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*We have received favours from I. Y. ; X. London ; G. M. ; Investigator, and A Scriptural Christian, on our Saviour's Union with God :—The Photinian as distinguished from the Socinian Doctrine shall appear in our next.*

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# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

No. X.]

APRIL, 1834.

[VOL. I.

## THE AUTHORITY OF TRADITION IN MATTERS OF FAITH.

WHAT is the just authority of ancient *tradition*, in matters of religious belief and worship? What degree of reverence, and submission, is due to the sanction of *antiquity*, as a rule of Christian faith and practice? Few of our readers can require to be informed, that this was, at no very distant period, the subject which, above all others, engaged the eager attention of the Christian world. It was on this ground, chiefly, that our Catholic and Protestant polemics, one or two centuries since, carried on their theological warfare:—numerous and ponderous were the volumes that were written, and great was the learning, and imposing was the logic, and marvellous was the intellectual dexterity, displayed on both sides, in the course of this celebrated controversy. It was here that Chillingworth, and Stillingfleet, and Tillotson, and Barrow, and other great men, whose names are deservedly venerated by the Church of England, won their brightest and most enduring laurels. We speak of the contest in this tone, because it was very much in this spirit that it was carried on. There is no reason, indeed, to doubt the sincerity and seriousness of the principal champions on either side. But the dispute was frequently conducted in a spirit of light-minded bravery and combativeness, which the better taste of modern controversialists has in a great measure discarded.

The truth is, the Romish divines soon found that their Protestant adversaries had greatly the advantage of them, so far as related to the direct testimony of *Scripture*. They were not able to support the authority of many doctrines and practices, to which the Reformers objected, with the evidence of "*the Bible, the Bible only*." They were driven to the necessity of upholding another authority, as equal if not paramount to that of the Scriptures,—namely, the authority of *tradition*. The Scriptures, they said, were

neither intended, nor suited, for vulgar use, and private interpretation; nor did these sacred writings contain a perfect account of all which Christian believers are bound to observe. The Catholics reminded the Protestants, (as they do still,) of many doctrines and customs to which they themselves were attached, which yet they could not prove to be inculcated in Scripture; for which, indeed, they could find no other authority than the tradition of the general church, delivered down in regular order from the earliest ages. One of these points, on which the Catholics argued with no little force, was the authenticity of the Scriptures themselves. On what grounds, said they, do you believe in the antiquity and genuineness of these writings, if it be not on the ground of tradition, the authority of the universal church, which has always received these books as sacred, and none other? You cannot settle the canon of the New Testament, which you say is your only rule of faith, without having recourse to the tradition of early times. On your own shewing, therefore, the ultimate appeal must be made to tradition. And is not this a sign of its superior, its paramount authority? There were various other points, on which Catholic polemics employed the same plausible method of attack. It is notorious that they reasoned in this manner, as they do unto this day, concerning the mystery of the Trinity. You worship, said they, three persons in one God. You declare in your creeds that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God. We confess this to be orthodox doctrine, as well as you Protestants. But you must be sensible that these matters are not explained, are not taught or mentioned, in the sacred Scriptures. If you say, that this must be regarded as the true doctrine, because it has always been held to be such by the universal church, from the apostles downwards,—we acknowledge the same. But you will be pleased to remember, that this is putting your faith in tradition. Why, then, do you inconsistently reject the authority of this rule, in the case of transubstantiation, the worship of the virgin Mary and of Saints, the use of relics, auricular confession, and many other subjects?

Many of our readers, it is probable, have been used to consider this as entirely a by-gone controversy,—a question clearly and permanently settled. But we apprehend that



a close attention to facts will show that it is not so, really and practically. Not only do Catholics still take their stand on this ground, and believe themselves invincible;\* but even Protestants frequently argue in a manner which shows that *they* are, wittingly or unwittingly, much attached to the same principle,—the authority of tradition. What else is implied, when the reputedly orthodox of this day reproach us Unitarians with the supposed want of conformity in our doctrines to the belief of the ancient and universal church? On the other hand, there has often appeared to us to be vagueness and temerity, in the manner in which Unitarians have replied to these appeals. It is desirable that we should settle our views of this subject on some clear and reasonable principles; and for this purpose we must have recourse to calm discussion.

We will venture, then, to propose it as a fixed principle, that tradition, how general and ancient soever it may be, can never be a safe and sufficient ground of belief in the truth of *opinions*,—the truth of *doctrines*. This, to our minds, is the clear dictate of reason. It is necessary to preserve us from the most degrading state of mental slavery. The experience of the world, and not least, of the Christian world, has fully proved that tradition cannot be relied on for *this* purpose. Why, indeed, should it? Consider, that if we are willing to receive certain doctrines on this ground alone, so may those have been who immediately preceded us, and so may have been the generation

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\* This argument has been most dexterously wrought up in a recent work, entitled "*Travels of an Irish Gentleman in search of Religion*." Can any one reveal to us, for certainty, what is the *real* meaning and object of that most amusing, and not unedifying book. Are we to understand, that the accomplished Author sincerely believes the tenets and practices, which he seems to defend, to be genuine Christianity,—and at the same time, sincerely believes Christianity to be a revelation from God? Is it to be supposed, that he seriously considers *reason* to be essentially hostile to the Gospel, and yet that he seriously considers the Gospel to be divine? We will not deny that such are his real views. We would instantly believe that they are—if we were quite sure that he intended we *should* believe so. But we must confess the book is somewhat of a riddle to us. We are not yet confident in our solution of it; but we are most inclined to the supposition, that the writer's sole object was to *bother* (as an Irishman he would excuse the term,) to *bother* the saints, the evangelicals, the new light and Reformation people, who are affording such amiable examples of Protestant charity and zeal in his native country.

before them, and the generation prior to that,—till we reach back to remote times, but moving from step to step without the slightest approach to any proper *evidence* of the *truth* of the doctrines. For when we have traced an opinion up to the earliest times of the church, unless we reach the testimony of the inspired apostles (and then we come to the Scriptures,) what is there in that circumstance which amounts to any proof that the opinion must be true? Were not the men of those times as fallible, as much exposed to the delusions of ignorance, prejudice, passion, and imposture, as we are in these latter ages? Were the multitude more enlightened, were the wisest more exempt from the ordinary frailties of human nature, in ancient than in modern times? Neither, therefore, from the nature of its ultimate foundation, the judgment of remote ages, nor from the nature of the channel through which it has flowed to us, the minds of successive generations, all equally fallible and credulous,—on neither ground has mere tradition any claims to our submissive reverence as an authority for the truth of *opinions*.

But is it not, (we may perhaps be asked) a strong *presumptive argument* for the soundness of certain doctrines, that they have been sanctioned by the general approbation of the Christian world from the earliest ages? Even to this inquiry we are disposed to answer in the negative. At all events, the value of tradition, as yielding even *presumptive* evidence for the truth of doctrines, must entirely depend on its connection with other circumstances. Tradition, the ancient and general profession of a doctrine, is not, in itself considered, any *presumption* of the truth of the doctrine:—circumstances must give it whatever value it has in this way, if it have any. When we consider the universal fallibility of human nature, the comparative darkness of past ages, to what an extent the most deplorable errors have prevailed, and how blindly they have been handed down from one generation to another,—it does not seem the slightest breach of humility and modesty in any man, to say that the mere circumstance of any opinion having been generally entertained in past ages, is no reason whatever that he should believe it likewise.

Is there no regard, then, to be paid to Christian tradition? Is there no proper use to be made of the clear and uninterrupted testimony of the church? We answer, yes;—

for our object is not to cast unmeasured contempt on Christian antiquity and tradition, but only to discriminate between the right and the wrong uses to be made of them. We answer, therefore, that tradition, oral, documentary, and monumental tradition, is the proper ground of our acquaintance with *facts* relating to the Christian religion. Though tradition may be no authority for the truth of *opinions*, of *doctrines*, it is the best and oftentimes the only authority for the truth of *facts*. Here the office ascribed to tradition is reasonable, and suitable to its nature. The Christians who lived in past ages, being fallible men, and exposed at least to all the usual sources of error, were just as liable to be mistaken in their opinions as we are. But they must have been perfectly well acquainted with all the important facts and events of their own times. This, indeed, is the basis of all history, as well as of our Christian faith. This is the only solid foundation of our acquaintance with the past. This therefore, I humbly conceive, should be our reply to Catholics, when they allege that we are obliged to believe even in the authenticity of the Scriptures on the sole ground of tradition. It is a mistake. We only make use of tradition, in this case, in support of a simple *fact*,—namely, that these books were received as authentic, and as holy writ, by the Christian church at large from the times of the apostles. Then, on the ground of this important fact, as a basis of argument, in connection with a variety of other circumstances, supported, not contradicted, by numerous other considerations, we think ourselves able to prove the authenticity of the Scriptures beyond a reasonable doubt. On these grounds we receive and revere the Scriptures. But to tradition we are indebted for nothing more, than our knowledge of a simple *fact*,—the value of which as an argument, as evidence for opinion, we determine afterwards, by the free exercise of our understandings.

Now, we are willing to make precisely the same use of tradition in regard to the truth of doctrines, as we do in regard to the authenticity of the sacred writings. No Catholic or Protestant shall charge us with inconsistency in this respect. We will rely on the testimony of tradition, where it is clear, for the plain *fact*, that certain opinions have prevailed from certain ages of the church; as well as for our knowledge of the extent to which they have been

embraced, and of the character of the persons by whom they have been professed or rejected. Thus far, but no farther, we will put our confidence in tradition. We must still crave permission, to use the same liberty in this case as in the other. We must form our own judgment of the value of this tradition, considered as evidence of the truth of the doctrines to which it relates.

On this fair ground, we are prepared, as Unitarians, to join issue with all Protestant Trinitarian Christians. They accuse us of unpardonable conceit and presumption, in rejecting doctrines which, they say, have been adopted by the general church of Christ from the earliest times. We reply that they themselves do the same thing. They reject the doctrine of transubstantiation, and a number of time-hallowed opinions. If they allege that there are grounds of distinction in the cases, which make their conduct justifiable and ours worthy of reprobation,—we admit that this is a reasonable argument in its *kind*, and ought to have much weight, *if it be founded in truth*. Shew us what these distinctions are, and we will pay them all proper attention. But be not so disingenuous, as to raise a clamour against us, which you know might with equal justice be raised against yourselves. We will allow, for argument's sake, that the doctrine of the Trinity is older than the doctrine of Transubstantiation,—though we do not believe that it is. But is there so much difference in their ages, that one is to be esteemed venerable and divine, whilst the other is to be rejected with supreme contempt? If fifteen hundred years' tradition stamp a doctrine with the authority of truth, will a thousand or twelve hundred years give it no title to respect? Tell us, then, exactly how old a doctrine must be, before it has had time to grow true!

We are aware that many serious-minded people have strong prejudices on this subject. They can scarcely think it possible that opinions utterly false and unscriptural can have been entertained from very early times, by almost the whole Christian world. But why not? especially if both the origin and the continuance of a belief in these doctrines can be reasonably accounted for. We might again admit, perhaps, for argument's sake, that it would appear strange, if the most corrupt doctrines had been embraced for eighteen hundred years, by the Christian world, and during all that time not a soul had ever suspected the truth and

purity of these doctrines. But we would fain be told, of what corrupt doctrines this can be truly affirmed? Certainly it cannot be said of the doctrine of the Trinity, of original depravity, of vicarious atonement, of everlasting punishments, nor of any of the peculiar tenets of modern orthodoxy. These dogmas have been more or less impugned, and that *openly*, by individuals and classes of men in almost every age of the church. How many thousands may have doubted or utterly rejected them, but dared not publish their thoughts, because the arm of persecuting power was ever uplifted to smite all heretics,—this of course we cannot tell. The few who did, from time to time, venture to dispute these doctrines, were quickly silenced by these means. If any one think that, *in such circumstances*, the general and continued profession of a doctrine, ought to be regarded as any evidence of its truth, we can only say that we are decidedly of a different opinion.

In regard to the leading doctrines of the Trinitarian system, in particular, we can see nothing in the circumstances attending their long and general reception, which should cause *them* to be unusually venerated for their antiquity. It may seem otherwise to persons who consider only the bare fact, that they *have been* received for so lengthened a period, but not to those who consider impartially the history of their rise and propagation. Their earliest appearance is so clearly marked with the signs of innovation on the purer doctrine of the first and second centuries, the aid of political and ecclesiastical power was so soon and so strongly engaged in their support, the ages during which they obtained the sanction of time were so notoriously dark and superstitious,—that if they had been professed for a much longer period, *under the same circumstances*, we see not that this would have given them the least claim to veneration.

It is not true, either, though it has often been asserted, that the earliest of those believers and writers to whom we can trace back the profession of these doctrines, were placed in so much more favourable circumstances, than we are in these times, for the attainment of right views of the Christian religion. This might perhaps be said of the first Jewish converts, or even of most of the Gentile converts, in the age of the apostles. But, independently of the Scriptures, we have not much evidence to show what their



opinions actually were: the evidence we have, certainly does not prove them to have been Trinitarians. In regard, however, to those Gentile believers, and especially those Gentile philosophers, converted to the gospel during the second and third centuries, in whose works we meet with the first germs of these doctrines, it is not true, we think, that they were more unprejudiced, more sincere, more scripturally learned, or on any other account better qualified judges of the pure doctrines of Christianity, than intelligent modern believers. Most of them knew little or nothing of Jewish literature, of Jewish peculiarities of thought and expression, so necessary to guide them in the just and sober interpretation of Scripture. They were exposed to the strongest temptations to mingle the reveries of their late Pagan philosophy with the divine principles of the Gospel. Indeed, it is universally admitted that they did thus corrupt the Gospel;—the only question in dispute being, to what extent they carried this corruption, and what parts of it are still remaining amongst us.

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## THOUGHTS ON CREATION.

*(Continued from page 300.)*

To the mind of his rational creatures, as to the Divine mind, the works of God must also appear to be good because of the enjoyment and the happiness connected with them. We can conceive of creatures which live without the perception of pleasurable feelings, whose obtuse instinct only directs them in the support and preservation of their life, and whose frame is endued with as little sensibility as the oak of the woods; but we do not find that the numerous tribes of creatures by which the world is peopled, correspond to this conception. On the contrary, wherever we find life, there is seen the capacity for enjoyment. The least observation of the animals with which we are most familiar discovers abundant proofs that to live is to enjoy. They taste a certain portion and degree of happiness. In the animals less known to us, we discover the same mechanism for the excitement and conveyance of pleasurable feeling which their form exhibits, and are assured that it is productive of the same results. And when we see in all such judicious and delicate contrivances

for the performance of the vital functions—the development of one general principle, but modified according to the nature and the habits of the individual; when we observe the wonderful nicety with which each part is fabricated—the structure and the action of each organ, and compare them together with the assistance supplied by a knowledge of our own frame and powers, but one rational conclusion presents itself, and that ascribes to every living creature of God, the wildest and most ferocious, the most timid and domestic, the stupendous and the diminutive, the power of enjoying life. This power, we doubt not, is variously bestowed; the perception of life and its pleasures exists with different degrees of intensity, but the power and the perception are inherited by all. In the comprehensive glance which the Creator threw upon his works, there was enough, therefore, to correspond to the goodness of his own nature. The myriads of creatures which bounded into existence, made by his own hand, the free and happy denizens of a newly-created and beautiful world, were beheld with an approving smile, for they were sharing that happiness which his benevolence ever prompts him to bestow.

The subject rises in importance and dignity as we proceed, for the good set forth by the works of creation is more illustrious, as these are adorned with mind, or exercise the mental or moral powers. Possessed of it, we know not how to describe it. Its nature is too subtle, its construction too mysterious for our comprehension. It is that part of us which emphatically attests our dignity, in comparison of the other works of God upon earth; and the consciousness that we possess it conspires to exalt our ideas of his creative energy. Striking is the announcement of this His last and most glorious work, “Let us make man in our own image!” and truly may we regard ourselves as wearing this awful image, when we feel the spiritual part of our nature fresh and vigorous, and glowing within us, and behold a world at our feet, over which we may exercise the dominion delegated by the wondrous Author of it. Think of the wide range of intellect, of the extent of this dominion! Think what a boundless notice we can take of the works on which our thoughts are employed; with what certainty we can discover many of the laws of the Supreme Ruler; with what precision we can

speak of their future operation ; how we can convert the natural productions of the earth to our use, and apply them in a thousand different ways for our support, enjoyment, and ease, and make the grant of the animated kingdom subservient to the same purposes ! The beauty which perpetually calls forth our admiration, ministers to to our enjoyments, and to our very existence. But when it becomes the food of intellect, it is productive of higher and purer pleasure. It enlivens the fancy, warms the imagination, prompts curiosity, stimulates the generous flow of the feelings, lights in the mind the tranquil flame of happiness, and, nobler effect ! teaches us to revere and love the venerable Author of beauty and life, and thus calls into action that first of virtues, piety. Look again upon man as he is united to his fellow-creatures, as his social qualities are brought out, and the discipline of life gives a form to his virtues, and rouses them to action. Behold mind acting upon mind ! Contemplate him as he is enlightened by Revelation, in the reception of the knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, prompted to wise and holy deeds by the first of motives—the will of God ; and even upon the promise of the first and most glorious of rewards—the happiness of heaven. Behold him thus intelligent and moral, endowed with intellect, and warmed with generous and holy affections, formed for partial happiness on earth, for happiness of the highest order and most extensive duration in that glorious, immortal country, of which he is the destined citizen—and you see him as he appeared before the Author of his being in the garden of Eden, the glory of creation, the image of God. And if essential goodness stood revealed in all the other works of the Beneficent Creator, was not man,—the only intellectual creature, capable of mighty thoughts, and of rising in imagination to the presence of Him from whom all this beauty and glory emanated, of contemplating virtue in its true sublimity, and displaying its power,—a splendid illustration of it !

The innocence, and peace, and joy, which universally smiled on the morning of creation, have since held but a divided empire. The race of men degenerated, and to the golden age of the poets succeeded one that was marked by fraud, and violence, and rapine. The glory

of the Creator's works was obscured through the folly and wickedness of his rational offspring. The power over the inferior animals, delegated for beneficial purposes, was exercised with unbridled arrogance and cruelty. Mankind turned the arms of violence upon each other, and hence the horrors of war and misrule ensued, hence the evils of tyranny, oppression, and slavery. But, madly ambitious as His subjects have been to counteract His benign arrangement, the works of creation still declare the goodness and the glory of God. Still nature, prolific nature, glows with beauty, and presents her accustomed offerings. Still the seasons hold their pristine course, the sun sheds his radiant light through the circuit of the heavens, the stars glitter in their darker vault, the agreeable vicissitude of day and night is uninterrupted, whilst these grateful changes renew the beauty of the world, support life in all its variety of forms, and accumulate for it a rich fund of enjoyment. And, looking abroad upon the great family of man, if sources of mortification appear, there are others of a more pleasing nature. The goodly characteristics originally worn, are not obliterated. Evils exist, but they are not remediless. The profane and the wicked are not allowed to run their headstrong career without restraint; the power which first called them into being, and the goodness which directed their attention to better things, is actively overruling them, and bringing their designs to nought. Thus if evils do abound in the world, they subserve a useful and benign purpose; and, if not in their own nature, at least in their tendency and end, may be denominated good. Defaced and injured, therefore, as some of His works have been, enough of their original qualities remains to give a value to them in the eye of the Omnipotent Creator, and to justify Him in still complacently regarding them as the memorable instances of His own goodness. And so exalted is that goodness, that He will never leave incomplete the designs His wisdom has conceived, nor fail to perfect that concerning us, which Revelation has made the object of a rational and undying hope. And when His human family has been wholly reclaimed from sin, and restored to its original innocence, and elevated to the affection of God, surely He will again rejoice to behold His works in their full harmony and glory, again pronounce them good.

W.

## REASONS FOR CHRISTIANITY HAVING BEEN FIRST OFFERED TO THE JEWS.

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“ The Messiah was indeed to be an universal Saviour, and this Sun of Righteousness was to arise and shine upon the whole earth : but yet he was first promised and intended for the Jews.” JORTIN.

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It will be admitted, I presume, by every man who professes to argue upon the claims of an alleged Divine Revelation, that such a Revelation must *originally* be disclosed at a definite period, and in a single country. Designed, as by supposition it is, for human beings, addressing its pretensions to their understandings, and proposing to advance their highest interests, it must enable the world to judge of its evidences, its discoveries, its spirit, its tendencies—and of the character of Him by means of whom those evidences and discoveries are laid before mankind. It must, therefore, have one specific *Founder*, whose own labours are, of necessity, restricted to a distinct, not to say a small, portion of the globe. My present enquiry is, why, in the case of the religion of Jesus Christ, *Palestine* was the chosen and favoured spot ?

Let it be considered that a former, and, till the *Gospel* appeared, the most important, supernatural communication of the will of God, had been made to the Jewish people.

Christianity, though of sovereign moment, and, most probably, the last of the special disclosures of Heaven's mercy to mankind, is still but one of a series of such communications. Nothing, therefore, could be more natural, and with reverence let me add, more proper, than that it should flow through the same channel, in which other streams of Truth, Righteousness, and Mercy, had descended from the Source of Bliss. Here we behold in Revelation a strict analogy to the accustomed course of Providence.

The Jews, too, were already in possession of promises, concerning a nobler dispensation than the Law, and a Prophet far more exalted than Moses. Notwithstanding their attachment to both, to their religion and its founder, they were taught to look for a yet better state of things, and for an individual who was to appear in the distinct character of their Messiah, or Great Anointed King. For this reason our Saviour was born, and lived, and preached,



and died, and rose again, in Judæa ; the seat and the repository of the predictions which announced his coming, and sketched the leading features of his ministry and doctrine. If it be asked, why the Jews, rather than any other people, were honoured with the possession of the former covenant, I answer, that although causes of the preference may be discerned by reflecting men, yet, for the present, it is enough to know the fact, and to be persuaded of its having been ordained by Sovereign Wisdom, for purposes of Boundless Love. Once admit that a *single* nation was to be selected as God's instruments of mercy to our race, and the inquiry, why the descendants of the Hebrew Patriarchs were that nation, has, in this stage of my argument, little or no importance. The point which, thus far, concerns us, is, that, since the covenant of the Gospel was to be *sealed* by an individual of the stock of Israel, and of the house of David, it necessarily and rightly followed, that the heavenly gift would be first offered to the Jews. By that people alone the *elements* of true religion had been preserved ; for which reason also it was fit that unto *them* the Christian Dispensation should be originally tendered.

When other circumstances are the same, Revelation will be most effectually communicated among men who are already best acquainted with the principles of Natural Religion. A previous faith in the existence, attributes, providence, and moral government of One perfect and spiritual Being, will greatly prepare the way for the reception of those of his messengers who are armed with extraordinary and supernatural powers. We accordingly find, that the miracles wrought by our Lord, in the presence of the Jewish multitudes, never failed of making their due impression upon those of the beholders whose minds were not perverted by Pharisaic doctrines and influence. Most of the people instantly exclaimed, "A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited his people;" while their rulers, believing, or affecting to believe, in the miraculous agency of evil spirits, objected that Jesus cast out dæmons by the prince of the dæmons—just as numbers of the heathens shut their eyes to the evidence of real miracles, because they gave credit to the lying wonders of magic, and of witchcraft. Our Saviour's works of more than human power, bore a testimony to him, which num-

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bers of his countrymen allowed; though, unhappily, they were prepossessed with the expectation of his being about to erect a worldly, and not a spiritual, kingdom. That very testimony, recorded as all the circumstances of it are by his evangelists, *we* can impartially weigh: and it governs our convictions.

But, inasmuch as Christianity professes to be a religion of vast comprehension, and unrivalled excellence and grandeur, and since we embrace it as being, in truth, such, the inquiry here meets us, Why was the Gospel nurtured in the bosom of *Judæa*, then a *subject country*, a Roman province? Why was not the celestial present rather bestowed, in the first instance, on the conquerors and masters of the globe; why did not Jesus himself appear in their metropolis; and why did not his doctrine obtain the suffrages of men, illustrious in arts, in learning, and in arms? This is the objection which under a thin veil of reasoning in favour of Christianity, has really been alleged against it by a celebrated historian, who confounds what he terms the *secondary causes* of its growth with *effects*, which themselves require to be explained, and which nothing short of its *divine* origin can satisfactorily explain.\* When he contrasts the sages of Pagan Antiquity with the fishermen of Galilee, and affects to wonder that Seneca and the Plinies, and Tacitus and the Antonines, were not judged "the most worthy" to be brought acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, he ill conceals his sarcasm on the one hand, and his want of just, deliberate thought, on the other. I would not detract from the solid merits and honours of any of the individuals whom he has enumerated. However, they were not prepared, like our Lord's Apostles and immediate disciples, for receiving so inestimable a prize. Notwithstanding their talents and attainments, they were the slaves of human systems and deeply rooted prejudices: some, if not all of them, were content to think with the wise, and to speak and act with the multitude: and could men inflated with the pride of mistaken science, men opinionated and intolerant, be the persons "the most worthy" of *first* hearing the sound of the Gospel? Had *they* the requisite qualifications for accepting its offers?†

\* History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Chap. xv.

† Matthew xviii. 3, 4.

Were these individuals less incapacitated than the Pharisaic Scribes for estimating its simple truths?

As numbers among the Jews, standing apart from the errors and vices of their rulers, gladly embraced our Saviour's message, so this people were in an eminently favourable situation for diffusing the christian doctrine.

They formed an important link between a rude, uncivilized nation, on the one hand, and a nation of false refinement and overgrown power, on the other. Their connexion with Rome, then the mistress of the world, placed them in a state neither of abject vassalage nor of independent sovereignty; since, while in civil matters they were subject to the government of strangers, they had the privilege of exercising their own religion, without control. Circumstances so peculiar drew the eyes of mankind upon them: native and proselyte Jews were found in nearly all heathen cities; and from Palestine the glad tidings of the new religion easily went forth throughout the world.

Suppose that Jesus Christ had been raised up among the Romans, and had made to *them* first the offers of salvation. Either he would instantly have fallen by the sword of the magistrate, or a continued succession of miracles must have been wrought for the preservation of his life. Or, if not acquiescing in this alternative, we imagine that, converted by his preaching, Rome had instantly changed her adoration of numerous idol divinities for the worship of the One True God, is it not evident that human power would thus have been enlisted on the side of our lowly Master; and that we should have lost the argument in behalf of his pretensions, which is derived from the signal progress of his doctrine, opposed as it was by the reputed great and wise men of the age—by the rulers, the priesthood, the philosophers,—as well as by individuals among other ranks, and of other habits? In weighing the evidences of Christianity, we should consider that the object proposed was to afford testimony, which, while it satisfied honestly disposed persons during the earliest stages of the Gospel, should produce conviction through future generations. Now this end, I think, could be only, or however, best answered, by the appointment that Judæa should be the scene of our Lord's ministry. His religion, growing up silently *there*, yet without concealment, (the leading facts of his history being, of necessity, enrolled in the annals of

the empire) engaged exactly the sort and degree of attention calculated to be useful in spreading it abroad; whereas, had Rome been the theatre of Christ's individual labours, his doctrine, if promulgated at all, must have been promulgated by the aid of secular instead of moral weapons.

No conjuncture of events could be more wisely ordered, than that by means of which he appeared both at the most proper time, and precisely in the region where he could exercise his ministry with the least interruption and the best attainable effect. In Judæa he could give the strongest proofs of the sincerity and the disinterestedness of his motives, and of his utter freedom from ambition, vanity, and avarice; could show that he was a king indeed, yet not such a king as the majority of his countrymen were ardently desirous of beholding. As the Jews, too, were main instruments of providence for reforming every nation whither they were sent, so a Jew invested with powers corresponding to a mission of unexampled importance, was peculiarly qualified for preaching with effect a religion designed to be universal.

There was something even in our Lord's descent and domestic connections, which could not well have existed in any other country than Palestine, and which has served to attest his claims. I have frequently thought on the difference of his situation in this respect from that of the false prophet of Arabia. Mahomet rendered his family the means of gratifying his selfish and grossly ambitious views. But the "brethren," or near kinsmen, of Jesus, "did not believe in him;" for they looked for a worldly Messiah. From *them* he received no assistance whatever in executing his ministry; so that he owed nothing more to his rank in life, and the class of society from among which he sprang, than as they gave him occasion of proving his independence on the circumstances of his birth. The Arabian Impostor was partly indebted to such circumstances for the measure of success which he obtained: but we explain on very different principles the pretensions and the success of Jesus, the Son of God.

If the foregoing considerations be just, it surely follows that the Heavenly Father has rich mercies yet in store for his ancient people, and will yet do great things for them, and, by their instrumentality, for the world.\*

\* Romans ix. x, xi.

Christians, moreover, are under a powerful obligation to fulfil towards the Jews every office of equity and tenderness. There can be no rational hope of their embracing, whether collectively or as individuals, the faith of Jesus, while we refuse to do to *them* what, in an exchange of situation, we should reasonably expect them to do to ourselves. Is it by withholding from them the rights of citizens, that we attempt to impress this injured race with a persuasion of the comprehensiveness and benignity of our religion, and of its surpassing excellence? In this country they still lie under a proscription, which they do not deserve; and which shows that the pure faith and spirit of the Gospel are far indeed from being predominant among us. I doubt not that, even at the season of our Lord's advent, wicked as were many of the Jews, the greater part of the nation were, nevertheless, superior in morals to their heathen neighbours. In rejecting Christ, they acted chiefly under the influence of artful leaders; of men lost to every generous feeling, and deeply plunged in profligacy and guilt. This was the calamity of the Jewish people of that day; and it was followed by what, if possible, were heavier calamities. But, assuredly, centuries of degradation, suffering and dispersion, have not rolled over this part of God's family in vain. In all events, men who have truly "learned Christ," will cherish habits of compassion, of forbearance, of strict and equal justice, to these their elder brethren. He is, thus far, no Christian, who would deny to a Jew political and civil privileges; that is, thus far, no Christian church or nation which persists in this denial. Nor can the payment of the debt be long deferred. In most countries of Europe, and among them Catholic and Protestant Germany—on the American continent, and in colonies of our own,—the Jews are no longer *aliens*. Why may we not expect that, ere a few weeks are past, a foul reproach will be wiped away from the Parent state, from our native land?

N.



## THE PHOTINIAN DOCTRINE, AS COMPARED WITH THE SOCINIAN.

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THERE are probably many Unitarians who, like the writer, have felt annoyed at the manner in which the whole Unitarian body were, on a late notable occasion, considered as answerable for what is called the *Improved Version* of the New Testament. Palpably unjust, and ridiculously absurd, however, as that decision may appear to them, it will nevertheless not be without influence with the public; and the severe diatribe of the learned judge on that unfortunate book, will attach itself more or less to them all, unless they take some pains to clear themselves from the imputation of approving its contents. I for one should certainly be most sorry to feel myself responsible, in any degree, for the credit of that work, and am g'lad of an opportunity of testifying that it is at least not approved of by all Unitarians. At present, however, it is my intention to confine my remarks to its version of a single passage: I mean the exordium of the Gospel by John.

It is felt by all, that whatever of deity, or pre-existence, or other superhuman and mysterious dignity, is ascribed to Christ in Scripture, is here expressed more formally and explicitly than in any other place. And hence it comes to pass that the explanation which the several parties give of this passage, becomes in fact a touch-stone for their whole doctrine. If they palpably fail here, their whole system is inevitably condemned. From the time when this passage was written, it has never ceased to be, as it were, the focus of Christian theology, to which all eyes have been directed, and in whose concentrated light the essence of truth has been believed to be revealed. Of what infinite importance then is it to a Christian sect, both to form just views concerning it, and not to have those views misrepresented to the public.

Among Unitarians properly so called, two leading views of the sense of this passage have prevailed: the one the more ancient, and nearer to the Catholic interpretation, advocated by many Unitarians of the third and fourth centuries, but especially by Photinus, bishop of Sirmium, who gave to it and its espousers his own name. Of the other, and comparatively modern exposition, the entire merit of the invention belongs to Faustus Socinus: for

there is, I believe, no evidence that, till propounded by him, it had entered into any man's conception. This latter, which may properly be called the *Socinian*, as the other may the *Photinian* doctrine, is that expressed by the Editors of the Improved Version, with some alterations, I will not say improvements, of their own.

Photinus, a native of Galatia, became bishop of Sirmium, a city of Pannonia, about the middle of the fourth century. In theology, he was a disciple of Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, the principal city of Galatia, who seems to have entertained nearly the same doctrinal sentiments, but not with much fame. Both of them were persecuted, and removed from their sees by the Arian party, who were at that time often in power in the Eastern empire, and at least as much disposed to abuse their power by tyrannizing over other men's consciences, as the orthodox themselves. It was in vain that the afflicted flocks of these good men exerted themselves to the utmost to retain their beloved and venerated pastors, with whose lives and doctrine they were entirely satisfied. It was in vain that they refused to submit to the decrees of the Councils, by which they had been excommunicated and deposed : the interference of the secular arm of the Arian emperors soon settled the affair. Photinus, ejected from his bishopric, continued to propagate his doctrine by such means as remained to him, especially by writing ; for he was a man of much eloquence and learning, as well as of blameless character, and master both of the Greek and Latin languages. His name passed on all those who in that age, so remarkable for the crisis of the great Christian controversies, retained or embraced his opinions. In that age, and down to the time of Socinus, Unitarians proper were chiefly known under the name of Photinians. But the days of darkness were at hand, when ecclesiastical usurpation, suppressing religious liberty by the flames of persecution, succeeded pretty completely for a season in abolishing the sect, and left little occasion for the use of the name except in the histories of the heretics.

Socinus, one of the chiefs of the reformation, raised the long fallen standard of Unitarianism from the dust, propounded its doctrines in a new form, farther removed from orthodoxy, and by so doing led to the distinction of the Unitarianism of this new school by his own name.

The name of Socinians has ever since, even in spite of themselves, attached to Unitarians. They, however, remembering the commands of Jesus, to call no man their master but himself, have never themselves adopted it, and have endeavoured to discountenance its use as much as lay in their power.

As a sect or party of men, they do, in my humble opinion, right, in refusing to bear the name either of Socinus, or Photinus, or any earthly master. But with respect to doctrine, the case appears somewhat different. Some distinguishing names for the leading modifications of theological opinion seem almost necessary, to avoid inconvenient circumlocutions. And no more natural, easy, or efficient method, appears, of providing such names, than that of allowing the several systems to be distinguished by those of their inventors, or most eminent advocates. Such at all events has been the received practice of the world, and not, probably, without reason. As there is, at least in my opinion, a great and important difference between the Unitarianism of Socinus, and that of the earlier Christians, and as each of their schemes has numerous advocates among the Unitarians of this age and country, it seems a very desirable convenience, to have in use some appropriate names by which they may be distinguished. I have ventured therefore to suggest, that the terms Photinian and Socinian may very suitably be employed for this purpose, and to adopt the use of them myself in this paper. It is time, however, that we should direct our attention to the comparison of the doctrines themselves. They will be best developed, in considering the interpretation which the two parties respectively put on the introduction to John's Gospel.

No writings of Photinus himself have come down to us ; but from the concurrent testimony of antiquity, we gather that his sentiments were just what we call Unitarian. An ancient writer, Vincent, expresses himself thus, " Photinus holds the unity of God after the Jewish manner. He allows not of any Trinity of persons. He says that Christ was a man taking his beginning from Mary. He denies the personality of the Word and the Spirit. There is only the person of God the Father, and the man Christ, that we ought to serve."—(*Lardner's Credibility.*) As other testimonies entirely agree with this, I shall not cite them,

except one only, in order to show more clearly the distinction of the Photinian scheme from that of Socinus. Epiphanius informs us that the Photinian doctrine was, that "the Logos or Word was from the beginning, but not begotten as the Son of God." They were accustomed to say, "that God had always a Word, but he had not always a Son." The essence, therefore, of this doctrine, consisted in allowing that the Word was eternal and divine, but in making a distinction between the Word and the Son of God, and holding that this latter title belonged only to the man Christ, in whom the Word dwelt. When the Word had been made flesh and dwelt among us, but not before, it is spoken of as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

According, then, to the Photinian interpretation, the Introduction of John may be paraphrased in this manner: "In the beginning, that is, before all things, or at least before all things of which I am about to write, *was the Word*, that mighty life-giving and supernatural energy which we have witnessed, which our eyes have seen, and our hands have handled in attending on the ministry of Jesus. *This* divine power, or principle, *was in the beginning with God*, inherent in his nature, and operative in all his mighty works. *Nay the word was God*: it was in fact, nothing else than himself: it was a part and portion of his own nature, inseparable and undistinguishable from him. But, as I was saying *this word*, which we saw manifested, *was in the beginning with God*. *All things were made*, or brought into being, *by it, and without it*, without its agency, *was not any thing made that has been made*. *In it was life*; it was indeed the true principle of all natural or physical life; but not only so, there was in it a principle of life immortal, ready to quicken mankind from death: it was "the eternal life which was with the Father and which was manifested unto us"—(*John's Epist.*) We saw the graves opened, and the dead restored: we saw Jesus himself, the first born out of death, ascend to immortality. *And the life was the light of men*: this life-giving energy was as the light of morning dispelling the darkness of night; the glorious prospect of the resurrection, abolishing the gloomy terrors of death: it was also the true spiritual light of the soul, overcoming within it the darkening influence of sin; enlightening and cheering both the understanding

and the heart. *And the light shineth in the darkness* : the enlightening energy of God was putting itself forth in Jesus ; *and yet the darkness*, the moral darkness of the prejudiced and sinful world, *comprehended or apprehended it not*. Men did not recognise or regard it. It was however the divine purpose that it should be regarded. And to this end, *there came a man sent from God whose name was John*. *The same came for a testimony, that he might testify concerning the light, that through him all men might believe*. *He was not himself the light* ; it was not in his person that this extraordinary heavenly energy dwelt ; *but he came that he might testify concerning the light*. *That light was the true light, that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world* : it was the true light of every rational creature : it was God : the good, the great, the unchangeable God : the fountain of light uncreated : the soul of the universe : the sun of the intelligent creation. “This is the message that we have heard, that God is *light*, and in him is no darkness at all.”—*Epist.* Yes, *he*, the blessed God, the Father of all, *was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not*. *He came*, as it were, *to his own*, his own house and family, *but his own people*, the Jews, *received him not*. *But as many as received him he gave them the privilege of being made children of God, even to those who believed on his name* : believed, that is, in his real presence and co-operation in the works that were done : believed in Jesus as sent from him, and acting by his power and authority. “Behold then, what love the Father hath shown us, that we should be children of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not.”—*Epist.* It knew him not when he graciously visited us, and dwelt among us, in the person of his Son. *Moreover*, to resume my former subject, *the word*, that divine and life-giving principle, which was from the beginning with God, in due time, according to the counsels of his will, *was made flesh* ; was intimately united with, embodied in, and manifested through the medium of human nature : it entered into a peculiar and mysterious union with a man, even from his birth, *and in this form, dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth*. *And we*, the first followers of Jesus, *beheld its glory* : the *glory as of one*, who being thus filled with the present deity, as well as sustaining the character of the predicted



Messiah, might well be called *the only begotten of the Father.*"

In this way we may conceive of the import of this remarkable passage of Scripture, if we embrace the interpretation of Photinus and the Unitarians of his age. And this interpretation has been preferred by many of the most illustrious English Unitarians, of whom it will be sufficient to mention Lardner and Priestley.

The authority, however, of these great men, who have not only been the "*facile principes*" of our sect, but acknowledged ornaments of their age and country; names, in short, whose immortality is already unquestionable; has not been able to prevent an extensive adoption of the Socinian hypothesis among modern Unitarians. So much has this been the case, that our orthodox opponents, glad to fasten on what has appeared to them our vulnerable part, and to take all possible advantage of it, have almost allowed themselves to forget that Unitarians have proposed any other explanation. This however is the error of a day: another age, if we mistake not, will see us in a different position.

Now, according to the scheme of Socinus, the term *the Word*, or *Logos*, is to be taken merely as a designation of the man Jesus. "Joannes, Verbi nomine, intelligit ipsum Dominum Jesus Christum, Dei filium, hominem scilicet illum, qui, Augusto imperante, e virgine Maria natus est," and he adds, "non ob aliquam ejus naturam aut substantiam, sed muneris tantum causâ, quo functus est."—*Socini Explicat.* lmi. Cap. Joannis. All reference to a divine pre-existent principle is here excluded, and in short, the entire doctrine concerning the Word or Logos is done away. The import of the whole passage is reduced to this, —Jesus, who as the great revealer of divine truth is here called *the Word*, was in the beginning, that is, of the events about to be related; and *the Word was with God*, that is, Jesus was known in the character of the Word to God alone: "quatenus Dei Verbum soli Deo notus erat." And *the Word was God*, (or was a God, as the Improved Version reads;) that is, Jesus may be so called on account of the divine powers with which he was endued and especially on account of his being constituted Lord and Judge of mankind. For in a like secondary sense, angels, princes and judges are sometimes called *gods*, in the Old Testament. *This Word*

*was in the beginning with God. All things were made or done by him, and without him was nothing made that has been made :* that is, in the new creation or Christian dispensation. Passing to the 10th verse : *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not ;* we find Socinus giving an explanation entirely his own : “ *Quid autem hoc loco sibi velit Joannes, a nemine, quod sciam, ad huc rectè expositum fuit.*” He then proceeds to explain the passage thus, “ *Christum in mundo fuisse, hoc est, inter homines versatum esse ; et mundum per eum factum esse, id est, homines denuo quodammodo factos et creatos fuisse.*” That is, that Christ was in the world, and that mankind was in some sense made or created anew by him. Verse 14. *And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us :* that is, Jesus, the Word, was flesh : was truly a man, weak, sorrowful, despised, and subject to death, like other men.

Such is the outline of the Socinian interpretation, and it is nearly that which is exhibited in the Improved Version. We may obviously observe this of it, that though the exordium of John has the air and bearing of a grand and significant passage, yet if this be the true interpretation, it really imports very little. It is a tissue of turgid expressions conveying very common-place matters : “ *dare pondus idonea fumo.*” Jesus is designated by a name by which he was never known, and is called God by a perversion of language entirely foreign to the New Testament : we are twice pompously informed, that in the commencement of his ministry God only knew his real character : then that he effected a great moral renovation of the world, and finally that he was a man. Such statements are certainly not without interest ; but there is plainly nothing in them more than what may be called the common-places of Christianity : nothing added to the views which are much more appropriately expressed in many other places.

Convinced as I am, that the Socinian interpretation is as untenable in a critical point of view, as it is poor, meagre, and frigid, in a theological, I shall not enter on a further exposure of it, because I consider that it already lies prostrate and expiring, under the repeated attacks of the champions or orthodoxy. I only regret that in demolishing this flimsy outwork, they have been allowed any reason to imagine that they had stormed our citadel. The inju-

dicious innovations of Socinus, they have, I think, successfully exposed; but the sublimer sentiments of the ancient Unitarians, men who interpreted the Greek Scriptures as their native tongue, and who, though calumniated as innovators, were in fact the latest retainers of the apostolic doctrine, left in singularity by the progressive innovations of the majority, will give them, I think, more to do.

T. F. B.

*(To be continued.)*

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## HISTORY OF DISSENTING CHURCHES.

*(Continued from page 306.)*

HAVING concluded our General Observations on the History and Character of the Early Dissenters, we now proceed to furnish a few historical notices of some of the Dissenting Congregations in Somerset and Dorset.—We first refer to the Yeovil Unitarian Congregation.

The history of this congregation commences with the year 1662. Among the ministers ejected by the Bartholemew or Conformity Act, was Mr. Henry Butler. Mr. Butler was a native of Kent, and received his education in the University of Cambridge, where he took his degrees as M.A. At an early period of his life he emigrated to New England, to enjoy amidst its wilds that freedom which the legislature of a civilized country denied to its subjects. On his return to England Mr. Butler settled at Dorchester, whence he removed to Yeovil, of which he was Parish Minister till his ejection in August, 1662. It is said that after being forcibly expelled from his pulpit, he concluded his discourse on a tomb-stone in the church-yard. To Mr. Butler's ejection we trace the origin of the present Unitarian congregation. Mr. Butler subsequently removed to the neighbourhood of Frome, where he continued with unremitting zeal to discharge his Pastoral duties. He died in the year 1696, aged 72. His last words were "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."\*

It is probable that from the year 1662 to 1688 the congregation, though it existed as a Society, held its meetings irregularly, and not in any one place, as the severity of the Legislative enactments of the period prevented the Dissenters from publicly convening together. But even this

\* The lineal descendants of Mr. Butler are still connected with the Congregation

precaution did not exempt the Yeovil congregation from the persecution of the times. Mr. Butler had often been fined and imprisoned, and some of the congregation were cast into Ilchester gaol, and prosecuted at the Assizes. The village of Compton, about two miles from Yeovil, appears to have been one of the places to which the congregation on such occasions frequently resorted for the purpose of religious worship. In these circumstances the congregation continued without settled ministers, and holding their meetings as a favourable opportunity presented itself, till the Revolution of 1688. The passing of the Toleration Act, which took place immediately after the Revolution, we may date as the origin of a public Dissenting Congregation in the Town of Yeovil.

About the year 1700 the congregation invited Mr. Robt. Bartlet, minister of Lower Compton, to become their pastor. He accepted the invitation, but divided his labours between Compton and Yeovil. Mr. Bartlet had preached as Lecturer at Sarum, whence in 1654 he removed to Over Compton, where he was ordained, and continued discharging his ministerial duties till his ejection in 1662. After this he preached in private at Bradford, then at Cadbury, whence on the passing of the Act of Toleration he removed to Lower Compton, and finally to Yeovil.

In the year 1704 the congregation purchased the ground on which the present chapel stands, and erected a Meeting House. Previous to this period they had held their meetings in the same place, in a house or room hired for the purpose. The Meeting house was erected on the site of a Chantry, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The deed by which this property is secured to the congregation, bears date 30th May, 1704. In 1710 died Mr. Bartlet. The sufferings of this eminent and pious minister on account of his religious opinions, are minutely narrated by Palmer, in his *Nonconformist's Memorial*, vol. ii., p. 463. A monument erected to his memory, is still preserved in the chapel.

Mr. Bartlet's successor in the ministry was Mr. Theophilus Lobb, son of Stephen Lobb, a dissenting minister who was much in favour with James II. Mr. Lobb remained some years in Yeovil, but subsequently relinquished the ministry and became a Physician. He is the

Author of several works on medical subjects, one of which, "A Treatise on the Solvents of the Calculus and on Gout," was read before the Royal Society, and by them ordered to be published. The order is signed by the celebrated Physician, Sir Hans Sloane. Mr. Lobb was succeeded by Mr. John Milner. The time of Mr. Milner's settlement in Yeovil is not known. It was probably about the year 1720. Mr. Milner subsequently received the degree of D.D. He left Yeovil about 1744, and settled in his native place, Peckham, in Surrey. He appears, from a Sermon which he published, to have been liberal in his religious opinions.

Nothing occurs in the history of several of the ministers who succeeded Dr. Milner which would prove interesting to general readers. We therefore content ourselves with subjoining their names:—Messrs. Robert Glass, who was minister in 1745; John Ward; Samuel Thomas; Samuel Perrott; David Graham; James Marshall, Author of a Life of Lord Chatham; and John Howell.

After an interval of a few years, Mr. Howell was succeeded by the Rev. Samuel Fawcett, who for some years came from Bridport to perform the religious offices on Sunday. Mr. Fawcett is the son of the Rev. Benj. Fawcett, M. A., of Kidderminster, the Editor of Baxter's "Saint's Everlasting Rest." Mr. Fawcett was educated at Daventry under Dr. Ashworth, where for some time he was a junior fellow student of the late Mr. Belsham. He was originally of moderate Calvinistic sentiments, but subsequent investigation led him, like his friend Mr. Belsham, to adopt Unitarianism. Mr. Fawcett is still living, and in the winter of an age venerable for length of years, still more venerable for its being adorned by many virtues, is cheered by those christian consolations which are the fruits of a life consistently and ardently devoted to the cause of religion, and to the happiness of his fellow creatures.

In the year 1809 the old meeting house was taken down, and the present chapel erected on the same site. The chapel was opened Nov. 8th, 1809, when the Rev. E. Butcher of Sidmouth, preached from John c. iv. vs. 23, 24, and in the evening the Rev. T. Howe, of Bridport delivered a discourse on 1 Tim. c. i. v. 11. In the year 1816 Mr. Fawcett, who had officiated in the congregation for more than fifteen years, resigned on account of his health. He



was succeeded by Dr. Thomas Southwood Smith, the Author of the admirable "Illustrations of the Divine Government." Dr. Smith left Yeovil in Dec. 1820, and is at present by his talents and acquirements equally an ornament to the medical profession.

In Dec. 1831 the Rev. David Hughes accepted an invitation to become the minister of the congregation. In 1832 Mr. Hughes resigned his Pastoral office, and with his family emigrated to Canada, where he unfortunately fell a victim to the cholera. In closing our notice of Mr. Hughes we owe it as a tribute of respect to his departed worth, to observe that his acquirements and talents rendered him a highly respectable and useful minister, while the amiable qualities of his heart caused him in life to be respected and beloved, and his death to be lamented by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

To the present state of the Yeovil congregation, it is unnecessary to make any allusion, as our readers will find a detailed account of it in the Gospel Advocate of last month.

*"The excellence of the Son, as shewn specially in his death, the cause of the Father's love towards him."*  
*A Sermon by J. R. Beard.* London; R. Hunter; Forrest, Manchester.

THIS is a good Sermon, and of the kind we want. It has been reproachfully said that Unitarianism is a creed of mere *negatives*. The unfavourable position in which its professors have been placed, as deniers of unpopular errors, may have caused it to appear so, but there is enough in it of a *positive* character to supply the wants of every rational and devout mind. We wish to see these qualities more amply developed. Let us be more earnest in setting forth our own views, and pointing out all their glorious and beneficent influences, than in attacking the errors of Trinitarians.—"Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." The chief cause of the attachment of numbers to Trinitarian doctrines, in the present day, is simply their want of something better, something at once rational and fervent, which may both satisfy their understandings, and affect their hearts. Mr. Beard's sermon is a contribution in this way,

though a very unpretending one. His text is John x. 17, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life." The object of the discourse is to explain the purposes of Christ's death, and the grounds of its acceptableness with God. We give an extract:—

"The moral efficacy of Christ's death chiefly recommended it to God. The all-wise foresaw how it would introduce a new power into the world—the power of self-denying and self-crucifying benevolence, how it would save men from selfishness, from wasting the resources of their happiness, from the wear and the devastation of low and raging passions, from fear, from doubt, from living "without God and without hope in the world;" from moral enmity to all that is holy and benign, and, therefore, the Father loved the Son seeing he disregarded even the sacrifice of life for the good of man. There is no moral efficacy that you can ascribe to any part of the gospel, whether it be the character and dealings of God, or the example of Christ, or the teachings and warnings in which the gospel abounds, or the influence arising from the views it gives of duty, death and eternity, but is intimately connected with the death of Christ. This is the one central fact around which all the parts of the gospel group, and from which they receive light, heat, energy, and importance. On this account the death of Christ, though but one of many constituent parts of the same system, is frequently put in the scriptures for the whole system itself, just as the world—to us the most important of the heavenly bodies—is sometimes taken to mean not only this earth, but the whole of the solar system and the whole of the universe of God. The death of Christ, then, is a term which concentrates all that the gospel of God is fitted to effect for man, through Jesus Christ. And on account of its preeminent consequence—this same preeminent consequence which made apostles and martyrs regard it as the sign and representative of the whole work of redemption,—on account of its preeminent consequence in the new spiritual creation, was the death of Christ the chief object of the divine approbation."

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*"The Claims of Unitarians to the Christian Name."*  
*A Discourse delivered at the Unitarian Chapel,*  
*Plymouth, February 16th, 1834, by W. J. Odgers,*  
*Minister of the Chapel. Plymouth: G. P. Hearder.*

THE spirit of bigotry towards Unitarians, stirred up afresh by some recent proceedings, seems to have manifested itself strongly in Plymouth. The pulpit and the press have sent forth their anathemas against us, in that populous locality. Mr. Odgers, the able and active minister of the Unitarian congregation in that town, felt himself called on by these circumstances to preach, and at the request of his friends, to publish, this vindication of

our claims to the Christian name. It is a clear and energetic defence of our character and principles. The absurdity of the popular cry against us, as being no Christians, is well illustrated in the following passage:—

“The ground on which the name of Christian is refused us, is simply this,—that we cannot find in the sacred writings those doctrines which Trinitarians find there, but which some of the most highly gifted of human beings have been unable to discover in them. It is because we have ventured to use the same right which other Christians claim for themselves, that of exercising their own judgment in ascertaining what doctrines are taught in the volume of inspiration. For this it is that we are deemed unworthy to bear the name of Christian; I leave you to decide impartially whether this is a just and sufficient one? And suppose, for a moment, that all Christians should act upon this principle of exclusion, (and no individual or body of men can have a greater right to do so than another) what would be the result? The whole Christian world would, in this case, speedily be *unchristianized*. We might then hear a disciple of Calvin saying to his Arminian brother, “The doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation is an indispensable part of the religion of Christ. If you do not hold this doctrine you cannot be a ‘preacher of Christ’s holy gospel,’ and therefore you are not a Christian.” In the same way a Baptist might refuse the Christian name to all who would not advocate Adult Baptism by immersion; and a member of the Established Church might refuse it to all who would not profess to believe the absurdities and contradictions of the Athanasian Creed. This would be acting precisely on the same principle which directs the conduct of those who now deny that Unitarians are Christians. And what is this, but to assume for themselves that *infallibility* which they refuse to acknowledge in the Pope of Rome?”

#### ANOTHER MISTAKE OF SIR EDWARD SUGDEN’S.

In Sir Edward Sugden’s speech on the case of Lady Hewley’s trustees, we meet with the following passage:—  
 “I believe they call themselves ‘Unitarian Christians’; the thing is absurd and ridiculous, they may with equal propriety call themselves French Englishmen.” It is here assumed by the learned knight, that there is an absolute inconsistency between the terms “Unitarian” and “Christian,” insomuch that no persons can lay claim to both names without making themselves ridiculous. We might be deemed presumptuous if we were to pronounce this a gross and unfortunate blunder, on our own humble judgment; but it may be allowed us perhaps to match one great and learned authority against another, on this sub-

ject. The counter authority that we shall appeal to, then, is that of the Right Reverend Father in God, Henry, Lord Bishop of Exeter. In that Prelate's lately published Charge, we find this passage ;—" Those who call themselves *Unitarians*, for I need not say that WE (*i. e.* the members and clergy of the establishment,) ARE REALLY UNITARIANS." Now, surely, the Bishop did not mean, in saying this, to *unchristianize* himself and his own orthodox church. According to his views, therefore, " Unitarian " and " Christian " are so far from being incongruous names, that the one is almost implied in the other. In these days, however, when definitions of Christianity, and other grave questions of theology are debated in our courts of law, some may entertain doubts as to who is the best authority in these matters, a Barrister or a Bishop. Certain it is, that their authorities are here directly at variance. If Sir Edward be right, the Bishop has made himself as ridiculous as though he had boasted of being a *French Englishman*. If Dr. Phillpotts be right, Sir Edward Sugden has been guilty of ignorant and dogmatical impertinence, towards those to whom we are quite sure he would wish to be exceedingly complacent. We observe that this precious morsel has been quoted with approbation in the "*Western Watchman*," a periodical understood to be conducted by an Evangelical Church Clergyman at Plymouth. Let the reverend editor beware how he thus holds up his own Diocesan to contempt.

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

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Those public measures, to which we have been accustomed to call the attention of our readers, have made some progress within the last month. On the whole, perhaps, our prospect is a little more cheering than it was at the commencement of the Parliamentary Session ; yet nothing appears likely to be done, in these matters, on a truly just and liberal scale.

*Dissenters' Marriages.*—A bill has been laid before the House of Commons, by Lord John Russell, to provide for the legal contracting and solemnization of marriages

among Dissenters, without the religious services of the Establishment. The main provisions of the bill are these :—Dissenters, wishing to be married, must proceed in the first place, as at present, and as though they were members of the Establishment ; that is, they must either procure an ecclesiastical licence, or cause the bans of marriage to be published in the parish church : after the publication of the bans, they must procure a certificate of this having been done, from the clergyman ; then the Dissenting minister of the chapel, in which the parties propose to be married, *must give notice that he will proceed on a certain day of the week to celebrate the marriage* ; when the ceremony has been performed, it must be duly registered by the minister, and a copy transmitted to the general Registrar of the Diocese ;—these marriages of Dissenters, are to be allowed to take place only in certain chapels licenced for that purpose ; and a printed or written notice that such a licence has been procured must be placed in some conspicuous part of the chapel. Many of these provisions are deemed highly objectionable : a general discontent has been manifested amongst all classes of Dissenters. There can be no reasonable doubt that the noble author of the measure honestly intends to give us substantial relief ; and perhaps the difficulties are greater than we are apt to suppose. Still we cannot but think, that some parts of the bill are calculated to be most unnecessarily and idly vexatious. This is the more astonishing as both Lord John Russell himself, and every one who spoke in favour of his proposal, agreed that the just and proper thing to be done, would be to make marriage, as far as the State should interfere with it, *entirely a civil contract*. Why, then, is not this done at once ? Why should either the interests or the feelings of one portion of the community be allowed to hinder the adoption of what is confessedly just and proper ? We sincerely hope that, upon reconsideration, the more obnoxious provisions of this bill may be done away with. It would, perhaps, in its present state, relieve us from all that can fairly be regarded as a burden upon conscience ; but it would be, in some respects, a most awkward and ungracious mode of giving us this relief.

*Church Rates.*—We are still very much in the dark as to the intentions of Government on this subject. Lord Grey has expressed himself in a manner which would imply



that he is determined not to yield the abolition of compulsory payments, for the support of the established worship. On the other hand, Lord Althorp has given notice of a measure on the subject, which "he trusts will prove satisfactory to all parties." We understand that the Ministers have it in contemplation to stand upon the old ecclesiastical-law distinction, between a rate for maintaining the *fabric*, the *buildings* of the church, and a rate for the current expenses of divine worship; and that they will propose to exempt Dissenters from all payment to the latter, but compel them still to contribute towards the former rate. On the 18th March, Mr. Divett, the member for Exeter, brought forward his motion for pledging the house to the *principle*, that Dissenters ought to be exempted from paying towards the support of a worship which they disapprove. The honourable gentleman's speech was marked by the clearest and strongest recognition of the injustice of imposing this tax upon dissentients from the Establishment. There was a decided feeling in the House favourable to the principle of the motion; and it was only withdrawn in compliance with the earnest wishes of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the matter should be left in his hands. We must therefore wait for the announcement of the ministerial proposals.

*Registration.*—This, which is rather a national grievance, than one peculiar to Dissenters, is about to be taken into consideration; but what measures are likely to be adopted is exceedingly uncertain. Mr. William Brougham, the member for Southwark, is engaged to introduce a measure on the subject,—though, as appears, without any approbation, or even cognizance, of his intentions, on the part of the Government. Indeed, Lord Althorp has given the legislature to understand, that *he* means to propose a new system of registration in connection with certain contemplated modifications in the Poor Laws.

*University Education.*—We think we may safely congratulate our readers on the prospects of improvement which are fast opening upon us, in reference to this subject. It is now acknowledged that the only obstacle to the granting a Charter to the London University, arises from the opposition of Oxford and Cambridge. They have petitioned the King in Council against any such grant; and for a time they may delay it, but cannot finally

prevent it. What a miserable spirit to be displayed by our boasted seats of national learning and wisdom ! In the mean time, it is becoming daily more evident, that the illiberal oaths and tests, which exclude conscientious Dissenters from the honours of the old Universities, cannot be much longer preserved. A step has been recently taken in this matter which we hold to be decisive. On the 21st of March, a petition was presented to the House of Lords by Earl Grey, in favour of the abolition of those tests, signed by upwards of sixty members of the senate of the University of Cambridge, including many of the most enlightened and eminent men of the day, Professors Airey, Sedgwick, Lee, &c. A similar petition was presented to the House of Commons, by Mr. S. Rice, Monday, 24th. The petition was ably supported by Lords Grey, Brougham, Durham, and Ellenborough. It was objected to by the Dukes Wellington and Cumberland and Mr. Cobbett ! We say, therefore, that the abolition of these disgraceful restrictions is now decided ;—nothing remains but the questions of time and manner.

A strong, but, for the most part a temperate expression of feeling, has been exhibited by Dissenters throughout the country. On Wednesday, the 5th of March, and again, by adjournment, on Thursday the 6th, a great meeting of Dissenters was held at Manchester, consisting of all sects, in which after a long, able, and energetic debate, a petition to Parliament was agreed on, and has been signed by immense numbers, setting forth their grievances and their determination to seek redress, in the most resolute terms.

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COPY OF A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE  
CHRISTIAN REFORMER.

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[We cheerfully give insertion to the following letter, and recommend the objects of it to the generosity of our readers. It certainly is a most hard case, that a few individuals, who can so ill afford it, should endure the consequences of those unjust proceedings, which have not been provoked by any conduct of theirs, but by the obnoxious-

ness of our common principles as Unitarians. We shall be happy to make ourselves of any service in this case.]

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Sir,—Having for some time waited for a more suitable person than myself to address the Unitarian public on the subject of this letter, I at length venture to do so, in the hope, that the sole wish to be of service, by which I am actuated, may excuse what may be questionable in the act, and that the cause I recommend, may not be allowed to suffer through the unfitness of its advocate.

I wish, Sir, to call the attention of your readers to the distress which has been occasioned by the suspension of the payments made by the Trustees of the pious and benevolent Lady Hewley, to ministers of the Presbyterian and Unitarian denomination. Out of thirty, who, I understand, received from the fund, there can hardly be less than twenty whom the suspension has reduced to difficulty—some to distress. In this county, occasional relief has been afforded, by the kind interposition of a few benevolent individuals, but this, I believe, has been insufficient, nor am I aware that its continuance can be secured; certainly it is not proper that a burden should lie on a few, which ought to be borne by all who have ability. Out of the county of Lancaster, there are others, to whose wants relief, so far as I know, has not been administered, or but very partially. One of these worthy but distressed men has recently addressed me thus—"You know I am the minister of a small and poor congregation; I have suffered the loss of half my salary, £24, by Lady Hewley's case; I have long been in a bad state of health, have a large family, and am in great distress." Now, whatever may have hitherto been done in any part, has this defect, that the recipients, owing to the mode in which the aid has been raised and given, could not reckon on any sum as an integral portion of their means, within a given period. The aid therefore has been of less value than it might have been, and the anxiety of the ministers greater than necessary. Nor can any one who has the slightest acquaintance with domestic economy, doubt that certainty as to resources, contributes no little, not only to good management, but to peace of mind, and integrity of character. If there is force in these considerations, it would appear desirable that a fund should be raised, to meet the exigency created by the narrow spirit of men, whose conduct conflicts most strangely with their professions. I will freely avow that I am no friend to the eleemosynary support of religion. Far better, in my opinion, would it have been for the cause of free enquiry and scriptural truth, had the charity of the pious dead not descended to any of our churches; but our position is artificial, and any attempt to realize principles which may be sound in the abstract, would, I fear, entail permanent and unmerited suffering on many excellent persons. Circumstanced therefore as we are, we are required not to theorise, but to act. We must not let our brethren and their families vegetate on the scantiest portion, that will in their situation sustain existence, because orthodoxy has once more shewed the spirit of persecution, and because some of us may in our speculations carry "The Voluntary Principle" to its full extent. It may be urged,

that the congregations, on behalf of whose ministers the appeal is made, are not prosperous. Generally, this perhaps is true. But so far from diminishing the claims of the ministers, the allegation should increase our concern for them, seeing they have to suffer the privation, not only of a sufficiency of means, but the high reward that ensues from successful labour. The want of prosperity, is mainly the result of position, not of personal defects. These ministers are for the most part, men who are in advance of the world around them, and the process of whose minds, from a traditionary to a scriptural faith, has unfitted them, almost necessarily, for an effectual appeal to the passions, not to say the prejudices of the religiously ignorant, and the morally low. I do not, Sir, presume to suggest any definite plan, but I do hope that others will be found able and willing to take such measures as may be needful, for the periodical and permanent relief of their needy brethren.

The Lord Chancellor has refused to expedite the hearing of the appeal. The delays of the Court of Chancery are still protracted enough to bring much suffering on those for whom I plead. But shall the distressed be distressed still, through the long interval which may ensue before the final award is given? Should the decision be in favour of the Trustees, the sums which shall have been subscribed, may be discontinued, and the donations appropriated to kindred objects, as the donors may determine. I have only to add, that THOMAS POTTER, Esq., Cannon-Street, Manchester, and myself, will gladly receive communications, (post paid,) whether from those who wish to contribute or those who need assistance.

I am, Sir,

Respectfully your's,  
JOHN R. BEARD.

Stony Knolls, Salford.  
March 14th.

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We understand that the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, have it in contemplation to propose the holding of an adjourned meeting of that Society at Bristol this year, similar to the one which was held at Manchester a few years since. We have no doubt that such a meeting would be highly acceptable, and useful to our cause in the West of England.

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#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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*We have received the papers of "Exoniensis," but have not yet had time to look them over; he shall hear from us.—The "Historical Notice of Eminent Heretics" has come to hand.—We have also received communications from W.; from A. U. C.; and from G. F.*

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# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE,

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No. XI.]

MAY, 1834.

[Vol. I.

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## ON THE NON-PROFESSIONAL STUDY OF RELIGION.

It has been justly observed by some of our best living critics, that the present is not an age in which the study of the higher departments of philosophy, mental, moral, and metaphysical, receives any countenance from our most eminent men of letters. It appears to us that a similar observation may be made, with at least equal justice, in reference to the subject of *theology*,—the rational, industrious study, of the theory and principles of religion. Divines may be as zealous and active, as of old, in defence of their respective opinions. The ignorant and superficial may send forth their crude speculations, and wild ravings, with greater boldness than ever. But it is seldom indeed, that we are now favoured with any valuable contribution to this noblest of sciences, from learned and talented laymen. Our philosophers and men of genius seem to have some unhappy quarrel with Christian theology. The *non-professional* study of religion, amongst men of literary name, has fallen into decay and disrepute in these times.

Our mind has often been struck with this circumstance, and never without experiencing feelings of keen regret. Our attention has been drawn to the subject, by a passage in Mr. Hugh James Rose's lately published Lecture, (delivered before the new University of Durham,) with which we shall introduce the few observations that we intend to offer:—

“To those who remember the history, and are acquainted with the literature, of other days, and with the studies by which the great men of those other days were formed, an apology for the study of divinity may, indeed, well provoke a smile and a sigh. The smile will come uncalled, at finding how vain it is, to hope we can look to any quarter without coming upon marks of the entire change which has taken place in men's feelings and pursuits: the sigh is the re-



sult of an honest conviction, that vain as it may be to argue on the matter, that change is a subject of deep regret. Wonderful, indeed, is the change, if we pass in review the last two or three centuries, and the great men who adorned them. Look for a moment to the writings of one who is perpetually referred to by the votaries of modern philosophy, as its great parent and founder ; and who assuredly was not inclined to value the pursuits or the prejudices of past times, at more than their real value. Yet with all this disposition, Bacon speaks twice of divinity, as the “ sabbath and port of all men’s labours and peregrinations.” And this he says, not incidentally, but formally, in treating of the various arts, to which men’s minds are to be directed. On the first occasion he says, that he reserves divinity for the last of all, because it is “ the haven and sabbath of all men’s contemplations :” and he repeats the sentence, when having considered all other parts of learning, he advances to treat of this, as the highest and best. Nor was his a mere Platonic affection for divinity. The passage which concludes the second book of his *Advancement of Learning*, shows how fully he had weighed the subject, and how deeply conversant he was with the study.

“ Let us consider, again, a wonderful and much undervalued man of the same period—Sir Walter Raleigh ; and learn from the first part of his great history, how thoroughly the soldier and the gentleman, who in his time aspired to eminence for learning, was familiar with the study ; and how long his contemplations had rested on it.

“ Look again at a most learned (though I cannot say in all respects a very high-minded) man—Selden—a layman, a lawyer, so deeply versed in divinity, that he may well be placed among learned divines. Look at Sir Matthew Hale, at Locke, and at Newton, and with their fame and character in their respective branches of study, remember their great proficiency in “ the haven and sabbath of all men’s contemplations.” I need cite no more instances to show that in other days, they who were the leaders in philosophy, in history, in jurisprudence, in metaphysics, and in mathematical science, confessed both in theory and in practice, the honour which was due to theology ; or to prove that the study to which they gave so

much of their best thoughts and brightest hours, gave them no reason to complain ; that it did not blunt their powers then, that it has not tarnished their fame now.”\*

This, we think, is a just comparison between past and present times, in this respect. To assign all the causes of such a change, would be a difficult task. Some of them are doubtless entirely adventitious, arising out of the peculiar character and events of the days in which we live, considered in a social and political light. Other causes may be found in the very nature of the stage, the point, at which we have arrived, in our knowledge of the true principles of religion ;—a point which, perhaps, naturally requires a pause, a time of preparation, before another Locke shall advance the human mind another step in the comprehension of the reasonableness of Christianity. Other causes of this change may be sought in the wonderful, and in some measure accidental progress, of almost every branch of natural science, of political economy, and of theories of human legislation, within the last half-century or a little more. These studies have exacted so much attention from learned and gifted men, so many splendid and captivating discoveries have been made in these departments of knowledge, fame, wealth, and influence, have so strongly allured their votaries in this direction,—that theology, with her unendowed charms, (at least for laymen) has been forsaken and forgotten. In the midst of political changes and agitation, the more mercurial spirits of the age turn their attention chiefly to public affairs. While science is daily making the most gigantic strides towards her destined conquest over nature, they whose minds are best qualified for profound investigations, are irresistably attracted to these pursuits, that they may share in the triumph and the glory. While that comparatively new science, which treats of the production and distribution of wealth, is constantly pouring fresh light on the sources and remedies of the most urgent evils in our present state, novelty and humanity combine to win many of the most powerful minds of the

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\* An Apology for the Study of Divinity : being the Terminal Divinity Lecture delivered in Bishop Cosins's Library, before the Bishop, the Dean and Chapter, and the University of Durham. By Hugh James Rose, B.D., Chaplain to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. London : J. G. & F. Rivington.

age to these important studies. Owing to these and a variety of other circumstances, ethical and metaphysical philosophy languish amongst us; and theological inquiries, in particular, are totally despised by those who, in many respects, are the best qualified of all men to pursue them successfully.

We repeat that, whatever may be the causes of this remarkable decay in the *non-professional study* of the more difficult parts of religion, the change is to be deeply regretted. Many reasons serve to convince us, that there are no persons so likely to be able to separate the pure truths of religion from the corruptions with which they have long been mingled, as talented and enlightened laymen, when they devote themselves to the study with that freedom from clerical authority and influence, which their qualifications for the task entitle them to assume. In comparison with professional divines, such men are placed in circumstances highly favourable to their becoming instrumental, both in the discovery, and in the promulgation, of religious truth. They are not so likely, in the first place, to be personally interested in supporting the doctrines of any particular church or sect. They have no worldly emoluments, which depend upon their fixed adherence to a certain creed. Their livelihood, and their childrens' bread, are not set in opposition to any reformation in their religious views and sentiments;—which, in the present state of things, is more or less the case with all clergymen and ministers by profession. Even the Dissenting Clergy are not so free from this sinister interest as they oftentimes flatter themselves they are;—and for the sworn and shackled Clergy of our Established Church, it were absurd to speak of any such freedom in them. It would be against all experience of human nature, to expect men situated as they are, to be unbiassed by their secular interests, in their speculations upon religion. But from this disadvantage, laymen are in a great measure exempt. Their worldly fortunes are, for the most part, equally secure and prosperous, whether they are orthodox or heterodox in their theological opinions. They have probably never bound themselves in any way to the acknowledgment of a creed, so that they are free even from the bias of their own past acts, which have oftentimes so great an influence on men's minds.

Setting aside, however, all considerations of mere worldly interest, we are of opinion that accomplished laymen enjoy many advantages in the study of religious truth, in consequence of their not being shackled by the prejudices and technicalities of a professional divinity education. The formal, systematic mode, in which theology is usually taught to young men intended for the ministry as a profession, may have its benefits in certain respects ;—but we are mistaken if it be not calculated in some measure to fetter their minds. Straited methods of judging, and technical modes of expression, have an unfavourable influence on their views. They are apt, unconsciously perhaps, to appeal to arbitrary standards of truth and falsehood, derived from their bodies of divinity, their text-books, their college lectures, and their favorite works of authority. If non-professional students of theology lose any thing from their want of this training, (which perhaps they do,) as concerns accuracy in smaller matters, they probably gain more in freedom and independence of judgment, as regards the truth of great and general principles. They bring more of the pure light of reason and common sense to bear upon these momentous inquiries. Their minds are more unclouded, and act more vigorously. There is the same difference in this particular, between talented laymen with sufficient acquirements, and professional divines,—as there often is, in a case of disputed property, between intelligent jurymen with a strong sense of justice, and professional lawyers. The latter may see technical difficulties and distinctions, whether important or worthless, which the former may overlook ; but in either case the non-professional man will be most likely, *ceteris paribus*, to fix upon the substantial truth and right of the whole matter.

In addition to these considerations, it requires to be observed, that whenever men of genius and fame, out of the clerical profession, do advance any thing of importance relating to moral and divine truth, it is likely to be much noticed and appreciated by the public. The very novelty of such a contribution to theology, draws attention towards it. When the clergy write on these questions, they are considered as being merely engaged in the way of their calling ; and it is left pretty much to men of their calling to read their works. But when a layman, already known

to the world by literary reputation, publishes valuable thoughts on these subjects, they are received with more interest, and the general enlightenment resulting from them is so much the greater. It is sincerely to be hoped, therefore, on all these accounts, that the present indifference of our scholars and philosophers to the rational study of theological truth, will be but temporary. We cannot believe that it is owing to the prevalence of scepticism ; for there is evidently less scepticism with men of this rank now, than there was a century since. Let us hope that the causes, whatever they are, will soon be removed ; and that we shall see the non-professional study of religion soon revived amongst us, under all the advantages which modern times afford. From such a change, we might date the era of a new progress in the knowledge of genuine and undefiled Christianity.

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## ON THE PHOTINIAN DOCTRINE, AS COMPARED WITH THE SOCINIAN.

*Continued from page 349.*

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In the former part of this paper, I set before the reader two interpretations of the Introduction to John's Gospel : I took the liberty to distinguish them by the names of the Photinian and the Socinian interpretations ; and I will briefly repeat, that the essential point in the former was to regard the *logos* or *word*, as a principle originally and essentially inherent in, and identical with the Deity, but not as having a distinct personal subsistence, as the Trinitarians teach ; or, what comes to the same thing, to maintain that although the *word* was with God from the beginning, the personal title of *Son of God* is not applied till after it was made flesh, or united with human nature in the person of Jesus Christ. It is, in short, that hypothesis which denies the personality of the word, as all Unitarians do that of the spirit. I will also briefly remind the reader, that the characteristic point of the latter, or



Socinian interpretation, is to assume that the Evangelist uses the term *word*, in this passage, simply as a designation of the Man Jesus, so that, "*In the beginning was the word,*" simply means, *In the beginning of the events of the gospel, was Jesus Christ.*

In entering, as I now intend to do, into a brief exposition of some reasons which appear to me decisive in favor of the former of these interpretations, I must beg the reader to keep before him the fuller statement of both of them given in the last number of the Gospel Advocate.

The first consideration which I shall adduce, is one which I believe will have weight with each individual, in proportion to his familiarity with the writings of Christian antiquity. Within the limits suitable to this communication, it is impossible for me to enter into detail on this subject; but in general, I believe that it may be truly said, that the *Logos* of John was universally regarded as implying something pre-existent and divine, by the whole Christian Church down to the time of Socinus; the notion that it was merely a title of the Man Jesus, never having been propounded either by orthodox or heretic, till broached by that reformer. Now I cannot think that originality in matters of this kind is any merit, much less that it yields any presumption in an opinion's favor. In the next place, I may state as an undeniable fact, that the use of the term *Logos* in Greek, or its correspondent *Mimra* in rabbinic Hebrew, to indicate a great subsisting power, principle, or portion, of the Divine Nature, namely, that more immediately operative in creation and conversant with mankind, was frequent and familiar in the rabbinical and philosophical writings of the Christian æra. The evidence of this fact is to be found in the Jewish Targums, or Paraphrases of Scripture; in the writings of Philo; in the Christian Fathers, and the heathen philosophers of the later Platonic School. The works of Lightfoot, of Lardner, of Watts, Prideaux, and many others, lay it before the English reader.

It is an obvious objection, What have these writers, this rabbinical lore, and Pagan philosophy, to do with the Apostle John? Certainly, we should say, *à priori*, no more than with the Apostle Peter. But what we should *a priori* expect of an unopened book, must yield to what we, *à posteriori*, know of it, when we have perused it. That

there is that in the Introduction, and other parts of the writings attributed to John, which does savor strongly of some of the philosophical sentiments and language of the age, has been very generally felt and acknowledged by competent judges. Whether we owe this adoption of some philosophic conceptions to the inspired wisdom of the Apostle himself, which seems to me most probable ; or whether it belongs rather to others who, from his communications and memorials, may have compiled his gospel for publication, I shall not stay to enquire. We must take the book as we find it, and judge of its contents on common principles. If, in fact, we find in it a manifest tincture of the religious philosophy of the age and country, we must not shut our eyes to this fact, in deference to our pre-conceived notions about an Apostle ; we should rather let our pre-conceived notions of the Apostle give place to such as his authentic writings convey of him. If, after three gospels had been written in Nazarean plainness, he saw fit to tinge the style of his own with somewhat more of philosophical abstraction, and mystical adumbration, who shall say that therein he did unwisely ? The wisdom of God might approve that the same substantial truths of Christianity, before taught in simplicity, should, by being at once adorned and veiled in this more imposing dress, be better adapted to the tastes of a large class of human minds. All, however, that I am now concerned to remark, is, that the better agreement of the Photinian interpretation with the prevailing sentiments of the apostolic age is an argument in its favor.

In the next place it is to be observed, that the Socinian interpretation appears to be such as the language of the passage will not fairly admit of. Had the Apostle in his other writings, or even had the other sacred penmen, been accustomed to speak of Jesus under the title of *the Word*, we might readily concede a similar use of that phrase here. But it is not so. There is not a single instance of the kind in the New Testament. In the apocalypse, certainly, a prophetic personage is in one place introduced, when the armies of heaven follow on white horses : he is styled King of Kings and Lord of Lords ; and it is afterwards subjoined, that his name is called *the Word of God*. Whether this personage is intended to represent the Messiah, is not absolutely certain ; but admitting it to be so, it must be obvious, that there is nothing in this passage to imply that the

term *the Word*, was in use as a known and recognized name of Jesus; and by consequence that it is not a case in point.

We come next to the clause which asserts that *the Word was God*, or, *was a God*, as the improved version as it, of which, likewise, the Socinian interpretation appears hardly tolerable. It is quite true, that the term *God* is sometimes applied in the Old Testament, in an inferior sense, to prophets and rulers: but that any such use of the term was current in the apostolic age, no evidence, that I know of, has been produced. In a quotation from the Old Testament, such an explanation might, therefore, be admitted; but not in the original text of the New. Moreover, it is one thing to show that a thing *may* be said, and another to show that it is a suitable thing to say. Admitting that it might be said, in a peculiar and inferior sense, that Jesus was God, or a God, still, I ask, is there any significance, dignity or propriety, in making a formal proposition of it, in a place like the present? Is it not at best a turgid, obscure, and equivocal mode of stating a very plain thing? If all that was meant was that Jesus was a heavenly-commissioned teacher, was it at all a happy way of expressing this, to say, that he was a God?

In the 10th verse we find the clause, "*ho kosmos di' autou egeneto*," (the world was made by him) interpreted, *the world was reformed or enlightened by him*. This appears to me as great violence as ever was put on a text of scripture.

Again in the 14th "*ho logos sarx egeneto*," (the word became flesh) is rendered by Socinus, *the word was flesh*. This rendering the original words will very ill bear, and it appears to destroy the natural force and significance of the passage. In speaking of a man it would seem rather unnecessary to assert that he was flesh and dwelt among us, unless with express reference to some who had questioned it. No such reference is here indicated. On the whole, I think, that the Socinian interpretation of the exordium of John, must be regarded by an impartial reader as forced and unnatural, and as a wide departure from the obvious import of the language employed.

I would now request my reader to extend his reflection from this particular passage to the writings of this Evangelist at large. Nothing can be fairer or safer, than to

make an author his own interpreter. When from an extended survey of his works, we have become familiar with his prevailing sentiments, and his mode of conception and expression, we are prepared to enter on the explanation of his difficult passages with a fair chance of success. And it is obvious that this remark applies with greater force in proportion to the writer's peculiarity of style. That the writings attributed to John<sup>n</sup> do exhibit a style of a very peculiar character is commonly admitted. But it may be of use to endeavour to discriminate with precision, in what this peculiarity consists. It is not enough to say that the style is hyperbolical and figurative. This may be said of the entire of Holy Writ, excepting the purely narrative portions. I would rather say that the sentiments and doctrines of this writer are distinguished by a cast of vagueness, abstraction, and mysticism; and that his style, though eminently simple in the language, is yet obscure in its sense, because it is frequently allegorical and even enigmatical. The mode of expression is also strong, loose, and unguarded.

Such being the character of this Evangelist's style, it is obvious that two practical inferences arise out of it. The one is, that we take care not to interpret literally what was intended figuratively, or allegorically. Such we take to be the error of the Romanists, when they insist on the declaration of Jesus, that we must eat his flesh and drink his blood, as a proof of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Such Unitarians conceive to be the error of Trinitarians, when they adduce the declaration of Jesus, that he had come down from heaven, as a proof of his personal pre-existence.

But there is another and an opposite practice, the impropriety of which we may infer from the consideration of this author's style. It is the endeavour to find in him nothing more than those plain, substantial, common-sense notions, which suffice for the understanding of most other parts of the New Testament. This I consider to be the error of the Unitarian critics of the Socinian school, and the source of their failure in this department. For that they have failed, I think certain. Their interpretations do not really please themselves: the utmost to which they aspire is to get over the difficulty of certain passages: as to eliciting out of them any grand and original concep-

tions, to adorn and fortify their system, and edify their disciples, they make no pretension to it. It is not the manner of John to disguise plain and ordinary thoughts by turgid language. He is rather to be viewed as a writer who engages his mind with contemplations too abstract and lofty for distinct and complete conception. Hence his occasional obscurity. He struggles with subjects of too vast and spiritual a nature for the effectual grasp of the human intellect. Ideas, impressive and sublime, rise before his mind, but they are undefined and undefinable. Labouring with the fulness of his thought, he throws some utterance of it on his reader, in the best manner he can. It being impossible that it should be plain and accurate, he is satisfied if it is energetic, though loose and obscure : if it conveys something of the force of the truth, though not strictly correct as to its form. I infer that those who would truly think with John, and interpret him according to his own mind, must lay aside their excess of precision, must close their eyes for a season on the cold and clear perceptions of vulgar day-light, and allow their minds, like the disciple once with his master on the holy mount, to enter into a cloud ; a cloud at once of mystery and of sacred light.

If I mistake not, the favorite and dominant sentiment of this Evangelist, is that God, even the Father, in the person of Jesus, had been verily manifested among men : that he had, in effect, dwelt among them, been seen of them, conversed with them : that he had, as it were personally, made them acquainted with himself, with his will, his grace, his life-giving energy : that he had proved himself to be the true life of man, by which he should be quickened to immortality. This was a grand idea, and it filled the mind of the Apostle. Much as he personally loved his master Jesus, yet after all what was a man compared with God ? It was the thought that God dwelt in Jesus, and that in seeing him they saw the Father, that gave to his person its mighty and awful charm. It appears to me that this somewhat peculiar conception of the character of Christ breaks out all over the writings of this Apostle. It was this which led him to borrow or adopt some of the phrasology already in use about the *logos* or *word*, as affording him a method, which would be readily intelligible, of conveying some impression of his sentiments to his readers. He wished to express, in effect,



that in the person of Jesus, God had been, in a very direct and especial manner, manifested amongst men. Yet it was not properly the divine essence itself, but something which proceeds from it, as the energetic agency of the Deity in his works, and his communication with his rational creatures. A conception much akin to this of the Divine operative principle was already current, and the terms of *mimra* and *logos* had been used to designate it. They were suitable to the Apostle's purpose, they served to convey a grand and not unjust, though somewhat indeterminate idea, and he employed them. But the sentiment itself finds utterance in many other ways, both in the Gospel and Epistle. It was not without reference to this, in my opinion, that he represents Jesus as saying, "I and my Father are one": and again, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father:" and again "I am the bread that came down from heaven": and I might add many other passages. I understand in a like sense the exclamation of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." In short, this Evangelist at the outset of his narrative gives a fair and formal announcement that a principle which he calls *the word*, which had been from the beginning, and which was God, became flesh and dwelt among us, in the person of Jesus. Ought we not to expect that this same writer will, in mere consistency, drop expressions as he proceeds, implying something both divine and pre-existent attending and belonging to this person. To me he certainly appears to do so.

Some, perhaps, will now be ready to say, But this is orthodoxy, this is Trinitarianism. Nay; because Trinitarianism maintains *not* the union of Jesus with the Father, but with a second eternal person in the Godhead, viz. God the Son: and this in consequence of making the *logos* a distinct person.

Another, perhaps, will surmise that our doctrine is Sabellianism. But it is not so; because that sect confounded the *person* of the Father with that of Jesus. Hence they ascribed sufferings and death to the Eternal, and were commonly called *Patri-passians*.

I apprehend the doctrine now propounded to be quite distinct both from Trinitarianism, Arianism, and Sabellianism; in short, I apprehend it to be ancient, genuine, apostolic Unitarianism.

T. F. B.

## ANTHEM.

KING of Glory ! Thee the Stars  
 Praise for ever as they roll,  
 Tracing, like cherubic cars,  
 Golden cycles round the pole,  
 Drawing, from Thy voice divine,  
 Power to roll and light to shine.

King of Glory ! Thee the Deep  
 Praiseth with its world of waves—  
 Murmuring in their azure sleep,  
 Thundering through their sunless caves,  
 Still they lift, in storm or calm,  
 To their God one lofty psalm.

King of Glory ! Thee the Earth  
 Praiseth in her every change—  
 Spring may come in gladness forth,  
 Winter o'er the wreck'd year range,  
 But the green or leafless tree  
 Sendeth still one hymn to Thee.

King of Glory ! Thee all Life  
 Praiseth in its every form—  
 From the eagle, sunbeam-rife,  
 Downward to the darkling worm,  
 All the ranks of being raise  
 To the Lord of Life their praise.

King of Glory ! Man Thy name,  
 More than all, should glorify,  
 Kindled with a loftier flame,  
 Born for high eternity—  
 King of Glory ! Sire Divine !  
 Hear our praise and make us Thine !

*Crediton.*

## THE QUALIFICATIONS AND SUCCESS OF THE FIRST PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL.

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IN order to insure the success of any important undertaking, it is necessary to call in the aid of power and influence. This is a fact which our own experience and the history of the world equally establish. Is it our object to carry into execution any scheme of public utility? It is indispensable to the success of the scheme that the patronage of the great and influential be engaged in its support; it is needful that those who take the lead in public affairs come forward in its behalf. For want of this patronage many a scheme fraught with public advantage has been rendered abortive. And others, whose usefulness has been most apparent, have had to struggle through many difficulties till the tide of popular opinion, guided by a few individuals, has set in their favour, and fashion, rather than a conviction of their importance, and a laudable desire to be instrumental to their promotion, has brought them to bear. It is scarcely necessary to ask the reason of this, for we know that the multitude are too often guided in their conduct by the decisions of a few, whom experience and wisdom in some cases qualify for being the guides of others, and the voice of the public elects to the office, but who oftener take upon themselves the duties of it without possessing the necessary qualifications.

Looking more broadly upon the affairs of the world, the same rule holds good. No striking alteration in the political or religious state of mankind, nor even in morals, has been produced without the sanction and the active co-operation of the great and mighty ones of the earth. When these come forward all is well; when these take the lead there are numbers to follow in their train, the plan in contemplation is realized, and the change, whether advantageous, or as has sometimes been the case disadvantageous, is produced. The majority of mankind being thus under the direction of the minority, obedient to its will and complying even with its caprice, it becomes generally, if not always, necessary, to bespeak the good offices of those who compose the minority if we wish our schemes to be successful. In former ages this has been indispensable

even to the welfare of a cause the utility of which was self-evident, and ought to have secured at once the suffrages of all; and it is no less indispensable in the age now present. And yet, there is, at the same time, one event of great magnitude which transpired when there was no aid of this kind to bring it to pass; there is one change of a very important and extraordinary nature, which was wrought in opposition to the influence and the powers of the world—the establishment of the Christian Religion.

According to the common notions of mankind, and the usual order of things, it would have been prudent in the great Founder of Christianity to have sought the aid of the leading men of the country in which he unfolded his commission; to have submitted his credentials to their examination, and to have enlisted them of his party. The lax notions which are much too prevalent in the world, would have permitted him to minister to their avarice, their ambition, their cupidity—to lure them to his cause by the promise of worldly advantages. How far he deviated from the customs of mankind, and how little he valued the corrupt maxims of the world, the history of his deeds sufficiently proves. It was not his aim to humour the passions and the caprices of the great, in order that he might avail himself of their assistance to accomplish his purposes. He asked not their aid on any terms but those which truth and honour prescribed, and even on such terms as these he was not too anxious to secure it. He trusted for success to other means, and instead of cringing to gain the patronage of the powerful, instead of servilely adulating them, he sought to enrol amongst his followers, men whose minds were teachable and free from glaring prejudice, and whom the things of the world would not win away from the pursuit of the truth.

As a part of that extensive plan which comprehended the moral reformation of mankind, it became needful for him to select from among the number of his attendants a few who should be constantly in his presence, receive his instructions, enjoy his confidence, and succeed him in the beneficial office of evangelizing the world. And upon whom was his choice fixed? Not upon men of wealth and station, of talent and cunning, of intrigue and daring; but upon some of the humble sons of mortality. He

chose for his disciples men undistinguished by birth or fortune, of moderate capacities and moderate desires, and the wisdom of his choice is proved by the success which crowned their efforts in the diffusion of gospel truth.

Turning to the narrative of his life, we find him near the sea of Galilee in conversation with two brethren, Simon and Andrew, whose occupation was that of fishermen. He summoned them to him, and, in allusion to their calling, engaged them to become *fishers of men*, i.e. to preach the doctrines in the knowledge of which he should instruct them, and bring mankind into the belief of them. The circumstances and pursuits of the other Apostles were very similar; nor was it without reason, as we shall soon perceive, that Jesus summoned those to his aid who appeared so little qualified to render him any great and permanent assistance in the grand undertaking upon which he had entered.

The station in life of the Apostles was unimportant and humble. Their possessions were few. Their attainments were not many, for their minds had received but a moderate share of cultivation. They were not called upon, therefore, to make such vast sacrifices as would place a stumbling-block in the way of their reception of the gospel. Unlike the young ruler, they did not feel an invincible reluctance to sacrifice their worldly possessions, to sell all that they had, to give to the poor, and to follow Jesus; and although it was in their power to say, as was indeed remarked by one of their number, *we have forsaken all and followed thee*, and great praise is due to them for acting with such disinterestedness; yet the sacrifice was not so great as would have been required at the hands of many: it did not deter them, but was readily made. In order to heighten the effect of their labours and to increase the glory of their success, it is not uncommon to describe the Apostles as a few illiterate fishermen, and to represent them as members of the very lowest class of society. But this was not the fact. They were not the abject sons of poverty; nor were their minds destitute of knowledge; and we do not readily perceive the advantage to Christianity in ascribing its establishment to the dregs of mankind, and the more especially as the truth is violated by such a representation. The Apostles were not poverty-stricken, although they could resign their employ-



ments and possessions, with less reluctance than others who basked in the sunshine of wealth and splendour. Nor had they been debarred the advantages of knowledge. Whenever they speak, they speak as men to whom instruction had been imparted, and on all occasions, instead of betraying gross ignorance, appear with much advantage, deliver their thoughts in a natural manner, and clothed in language of strict propriety. A part of their number, we are aware, had acquired a knowledge of the Greek language, for their writings were given to the world almost without an exception in that language; and with this fact before our eyes it is impossible to deny that they possessed a moderate share of learning.

We readily perceive the advantages connected with the situation and attainments of the disciples of Christ. We have already remarked that in their inferior stations they had not so much to relinquish as would prevent their espousing the cause of their master. They were also more able to give their undivided attention to the duties of the ministry, because, having once relinquished their ordinary employments and modes of life, there was little to call them back or to plunge them in vain regrets that they had been so precipitate in making the sacrifice. Moreover, separated as they were from all the important civil and religious offices of their country, they were not tempted to blend together the things which God had divided, nor exposed to the charge that they had embraced the gospel for sinister purposes. With respect to their intellectual state, they possessed sufficient capacity to distinguish between truth and falsehood, to guard against imposture; they could understand and value those moral and saving truths which their Master revealed to them, and repeat them to others with propriety and force. And they were able not only to proclaim in the hearing of assembled multitudes, but to record for the perusal of distant ages, the doctrines and facts of our holy religion. Beyond this point learning was unnecessary had they possessed it in an eminent degree; and as they were unacquainted with the subtleties of the schools, untaught with false philosophy, there was little danger of their obscuring the plain truths of the gospel—of preaching themselves and not Christ Jesus. Whilst they were honoured with the friendship, the confidence, and the instructions of this eminent teacher, they

would lend a willing ear to his instructions, they would defer to him in all things ; and when he was no more with them they would copy his simplicity, give a faithful report of his actions, and teach us candidly and clearly as he taught the knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation.

It may be further observed that the prejudices of the Apostles, for they were not free from prejudice, did not incline them to devote themselves to the promulgation of Christianity. As far as prejudice influenced them, it was adverse to the cause of Christ ; for they had no idea of the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and in many points entertained wrong notions of his designs, and the nature of the success he contemplated. From the prejudices connected with learning and rank they were undoubtedly free. They only felt as Jews, the expectants of a temporal Messiah, and having entertained such false views on the subject of his appearance, they were the less liable to be deceived ; and thus prejudice with them lent its aid in the discovery and the spread of evangelical truth.

*To be continued.*

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## “THE LAW OF CHRIST.”

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*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR.—The Law of Christ is an expression that occurs in the Epistle to the Galatians. Galatia was a province of Asia Minor, inhabited by a colony of the Gauls. In this country the gospel had been preached by Paul with great success ; and several churches had been formed by him, A.D. 50. (Acts xvi, 5.) Soon after he had left the country, some bigots to the Mosaic ritual intruded themselves into these assemblies ; and insisted upon a strict conformity to the law of Moses, as essential to obtaining an interest in the blessings of the gospel. Many had been alienated from their confidence in the Apostle's doctrine, respecting the abolition of the Jewish ceremonial ; which had been superseded by the Christian dispensation. The introduction of these insidious views, in opposition to the Apostolic authority, had been the source of much violent animosity and contention ; so that the genuine spirit of Christianity was in danger of being lost in the heat and bitterness of

controversy. In order to allay this seditious ferment, and to show his earnestness in the cause of evangelical truth and liberty, the venerable Apostle, contrary to his usual custom, wrote this Epistle with his own hand.

He strenuously and boldly exhorts those doubtful disciples to "stand fast in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free" of the yoke of Jewish ordinances. The gospel which Jesus published is the charter of our liberties, and by the profession of Christianity we are admitted into the freedom of that community of which he is the head. Submit to no human impositions inconsistent with the authority of our Master and elder Brother; do not voluntarily enslave yourselves by returning into bondage; accept no addition to the institutes of Christ; cherish a filial and a liberal spirit; and let your religious homage be that of love and not of terror.

"The whole law is fulfilled in one precept, even this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." In lieu of all external ceremonies, the Christian law enjoins one grand paramount maxim, that of doing good; of doing to others as you could reasonably desire that in an exchange of circumstances they would do to you. Observe this one infallible rule, and be assured that you obey every law with which under the new dispensation you have any concern. They, who thus adorn their profession, need be under no anxiety lest they should incur the divine displeasure by declining, as of old, to connect the rights of Judaism; or in our days the formulary of any ecclesiastical establishment of the state, with the universal and everlasting precepts of the Christian religion. "Bear ye one another's burdens; and thus ye will fulfil the law of Christ." Bear with one another's infirmities. In the course of life, and in the exercise of the Christian faith, we all have our trials; and often to the full extent of our ability to sustain them: every one knows his own burden, and finds it heavy enough: we need not to have it increased by any unnecessary addition to the load. And yet, such is the strange propensity of some among you, that they are eager to impose upon you the burden of the law of Moses, encumbered with their own Pharisaic rites, the burden of its impositions, and the burden of its curse; a weight which is sufficient to press you down to the pit of destruction. Is not this a case of self-incurred hardship

and entanglement, similar to the perplexity and suffering of those, who in every age submit themselves to church discipline, and become tributary to their spiritual chiefs, who officiate with political or parliamentary sanction? But the gospel, which you profess, breathes a very different spirit. Impose not on those who are already overburdened a train of unmeaning labours and incumbrances. Sympathize in each other's sufferings; comfort one another under trouble; relieve distress where it is in your power, and encourage the feeble-minded. These, my brethren, are the requisitions of the mild dispensation under which you live. Here is no canon, enacted by a general council, or synod, and confirmed by the principal magistrate, the head of the church militant. Here are no summary rigours of extortion from any spiritual court; in which the adversary will deliver his victim to the judge, and the judge deliver him to the officer, who will cast him into prison, whence he may by no means come out till, he has paid the uttermost farthing. In the book of life no such penance is enforced, or sweeping penalties exacted. If you comply with the gracious invitation of the Son of God, to learn of him; and obey this easy, this reasonable, this lovely rule of life—"bear one another's burdens"—in your pilgrimage, you manifest your allegiance to Christ, and fully approve yourselves the faithful subjects of his heavenly kingdom, entitled to all the privileges and immunities of his auspicious reign. Those of your readers, who maintain the independence of mind, which is the proper character of nonconformity, will be pleased to discern their principles avowed and justified by the Apostle. Paul of Tarsus was likewise a strictly conscientious Nonconformist; considering the service of God, the "freewill offering" of the heart, and the result of perfect freedom. Whoever is desirous to be furnished with more extended observations on this law of brotherly kindness and mutual love, is advised to consult the annotations of Locke and Belsham. those admirable expositors on the Epistles.

Is the Messiah then to be designated a Lawgiver? In reply it may be asserted that He taught with divine authority, and not by private interpretation, as the Scribes. His "new commandment," and heavenly promises were attested with ample demonstration of "wisdom from above." According to our most learned juriconsults

Law, (except when used in a figurative or metaphorical sense, as the law of motion, or of proportion,) may be considered as forming two great classes, viz. laws set by God to man, and laws set by men to men. To the former of these classes—often called the law of nature—Mr. Austin gives the name of divine law, or the law of God, consisting of those rules or expressions of his pleasure, which God has left us to discover by our unassisted reason; or which he has revealed to mankind. Like Moses, Christ was the introducer of divine laws, to be inscribed in the heart. It is justly remarked that the use of many of the precepts and maxims of scripture, is not so much to prescribe actions, as to generate some certain turn or habit of thinking; and they are then only applied as they ought to be, when they furnish us with such a view of the subject to which they relate, as may rectify and meliorate our dispositions; for from dispositions so rectified and meliorated particular good actions, and particular good rules of acting, flow of their own accord. This is true of the great Christian maxim, “Love God with the whole heart; and be merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful.” These maxims being well impressed, the detail of conduct may be left to itself. The habitual readiness once acquired, becomes a second nature: devotional and moral taste is thus practically cultivated and enjoyed. When this disposition is perfected, the influence of religion as a moral institution, is sufficiently established.\*

EUMENES.

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\* The ingenious and truly Catholic Dr. Geddes, closed his critical remarks with the following comparative estimate of the respective claims of Moses and Jesus: “That the Hebrew Legislator was a great and a wise man is clear, I think, from the whole tenor of his laws; but that all those laws were immediate emanations of an unerring Spirit, is far from being incontestable, and is no part of my belief. Nay, the God of Moses, *Jehovah*, if he really be such as he is described in the Pentateuch, is not the God whom I adore; nor the God whom I could love. The God whom I adore and love, is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; his Father and our Father; the Father of Mercies and God of all consolation, who is no respecter of persons; who hateth not Esau and loveth Jacob; who visiteth not the sin of the father upon his children, even to the first generation; who willeth all men to be saved; who maketh his sun to rise on the bad and on the good, and sendeth salutary rain on the just and on the unjust.—Such is the God whom I adore and love; and his singularly beloved Son, Jesus, I, next to him, worship as his Messenger of Salvation, and the only Legislator, whose laws are perfect and divine.”



## ON CHURCH REFORM.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—It is not, I fear, very wide of the truth to say that, even at this day, Christianity is but imperfectly understood. The actual blemishes in society, the fanaticism, the indifference, the bigotry, the intolerance, with a long catalogue of minor defects, discoverable even from the judgment bench down to the lowest grade of humanity, show that the Gospel of Christ has yet much to accomplish in the diffusion of piety, and the establishment of christian principle. And what does all this prove?—that our religion is “too high for us to know”? It should rather be said that it tends to exhibit the transcendent excellence of its doctrines, and in the next place to indicate the weakness of its professors. It would follow, therefore, that this weakness will, of necessity, be in the exact ratio to our ignorance of the word of God, arising in a degree from the mistaken views of mankind of its genuine influence on moral principle and human conduct. This defect or error in our knowledge of this portion of the divine ways, while it leads to evil in general, is more particularly manifested in the current morality of the age, by the narrow, sectarian, or petulant spirit, which arises in the relations of neighbours, friends and kindred; or as it displays itself in the selfishness, duplicity, fraud, or folly, in the intercourse, dealings or false refinements of society. If these positions be true, the enquiry naturally follows—By what means can the christian religion receive its free and uncontrolled exercise in the world, in the task of assimilating the human character with that of its divine Founder? The answer is ready to fall from every man’s lips, without his considering the nature of the question—its bearings—its application, or its results. Every man is ready to exclaim—“Church Reform is all that is wanted.” Proceed with your enquiries, and you will find from one, that when tithes and church rates are abolished—from another—the Athanasian creed disused—a third, when the church is separated from the state,—then all is attained; every abuse existing is, or will be, swept away; and that prevailing sense of religion, and that glow of christian love will follow, which were designed “to cover the earth

as the waters cover the channels of the sea." I do not mean to dispute the sincerity of any man supposing or intending his own views to produce the charm of evangelizing the world, but the reform must be on a very compendious scale to accomplish all this. If a man intends by "Church Reform" to benefit one particular church to the exclusion of another; or if he intends to wrest from one party, what he will bestow elsewhere, but only in a different form, and by another process; this is not Reform, but the ancient leaven of Popery and of the first "reformed church" of olden time. If others intend to diminish, or cut and shape the fabric, without regard to the design and views of the Author and Finisher of our Faith—they cannot be christian Reformers. They are none of Christ's. The church established by Jesus Christ, was not intended to be paled in, or circumscribed by creeds or laws, but to be a law unto itself. Every man whose faith is fixed in the principles of Christianity, cannot resist the conviction that it is itself perfection; and human aid or law is abortive in enlarging its power, or guiding its energy, or promoting its authority. To such as have little studied the gospel, or have studied it for the purpose solely of profit, it may very plausibly appear as "part and parcel of the law of the land;" but to others who yield it implicit faith and obedience, it must appear, that the law of the land is rather part and parcel of Christianity—and that, too, but a very small part and parcel indeed. However prudent it may be, or be supposed by legislators, to reform by a little here, and a little there, (that human laws may not outrun the intelligence of the age) it is still right on the other hand, not to lose sight of the fundamental design of christianity, and to question and detect, where necessary, the spurious inventions and interested motives which are abroad. The people ought to be cautioned against implicitly receiving the plans of any and of all parties for the "Church Reform." Even our Trinitarian Cabinet, with their prejudices of doctrine, and severity of discipline, ought not to be trusted. And the hierarchy of the Church of England, with its train of dignitaries, functionaries, and minor dependants, ought only to be heard as defendants in an action of trespass—if not arraigned as being criminal, for the uttering of certain

canons, rubrics, and homilies, well knowing them, (or for the minor offence of not knowing them) to be forgeries on pure christianity. The church of Christ is entitled to its own king, and its own law. It behoves christians of every class, at the present crisis, to look steadily into the measures and progress of Church Reform with reference to divine authority; and not to be led away by theories, without comparing them with the objects of divine Revelation, whether they come from Parliament, from councils, or from individuals; and to examine every scheme, how far it is adapted to give or promote the full operation of Christ's religion in the human mind, and how far it breathes the aspiration—"Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on Earth, as it is done in Heaven."

X.

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*"Observations on a Pamphlet entitled 'Brief Examination of the Bishop of Exeter's recent Charge to his Clergy, by a Unitarian Clergyman, [Minister.]"*  
 London: Rivington, St. Paul's Church Yard; C. Upham, and W. Strong, Exeter; and W. Strong, Bristol. 1834.

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The pamphlet to which these "Observations" relate was a re-publication, with many additions, of an Article which appeared in the *Gospel Advocate* for January last. This circumstance, and our belief that the Unitarian Minister does not mean to publish any separate reply, will justify us in reviewing the "Observations" at some length. We have no right, perhaps, to consider this as an intended *Answer* to the "Brief Examination." The author himself has not so entitled it. He is an *Observer*,\* and he

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\* The writer of the pages we are reviewing has called the author of the "Brief Examination," somewhat quaintly, the "Examiner." It will be convenient, as saving circumlocution, for us to adopt the same designation; and as the opponent must have his title likewise, we shall beg leave to call him the "Observer." Our readers, we hope, will be in no danger of thinking of weekly newspapers, when they should be thinking of reverend divines.

has not attempted to go beyond his vocation. The most suitable title that could have been given to his pages, is that which he has assigned them :—they are *mere* observations ; such as any galled and wincing reader might have written with a pencil on the margin of his copy ; occasionally smart enough, frequently sarcastic, always dogmatical, and plentifully abusive. But how sad must be the disappointment of the purchaser, who may have spent his shilling on this pamphlet, in the hope of meeting with any confutation, by knowledge and argument, of a single important position maintained against the Bishop of Exeter in the “ Brief Examination.” Contradiction there is, but not confutation ; repeated perversion of the *Examiner’s* words and meaning ; magnificent laudations of the Church and the Bishop ; and floods of bitter railing against the Unitarians. On all the subjects properly in dispute, Tithes, Church Reform, &c., there is to be found neither information nor reasoning, but an absolute want of ordinary intelligence. Our limited space will allow of our noticing the “ Observations” only in those parts, where any thing of the least apparent consequence is touched upon ; or where the strange misrepresentations and confident assertions of the *Observer*, are calculated to mislead his unwary readers.

This writer is pleased to assume, in the beginning, that the *Examiner* was actuated in what he wrote “ by a most malignant spirit of enmity to the Church.” We cannot, of course, pretend to know the heart of either of these gentlemen ; but if the degree of a man’s malignity is to be measured by the usual outward signs, petulant abuse, acrimonious remark, needless and groundless insinuation of evil motives, we are sure that no impartial person, after reading these productions, will doubt to which of the two authors such a charge can be most justly attached. The only excuse for the *Observer* is, that he is unfortunately in the wrong ; he has a bad cause to maintain ; and whenever that is the case, great allowance must be made for men’s infirmities of temper. *An old soldier*, we suspect, could tell what an irritating thing it is, to find yourself closely besieged by the enemy in an indefensible position. What *can* a man do in such circumstances ?

The Bishop had said in the opening of his Charge, that the general character of the present times is “ hostile to every institution which Englishmen have been wont to regard with reverence, and above all, to the Church” ;—to which passage his Lordship has himself appended a note, acknowledging that he was wrong in entertaining these gloomy views.

"Such," he says, "was the impression under which I commenced my Visitation, but such was not the impression under which I closed it;—the Church has nothing to fear, and every thing to hope, from the feeling of the people;—there is a strong and increasing attachment to the institutions of the country." On this, the *Examiner* took the liberty of admonishing the Bishop, not in future to be so hasty in concluding that every desire for reform is an indication of destructiveness. Now, what says the *Observer* to all this? After alluding to the riots at Bristol, and similar excesses in other parts of the kingdom, he says, "I assert, and the occurrences of the last two or three years will bear me out in the assertion, that the Bishop was amply justified in the expressions he made use of." Was he so? Why truly this is a matter which the Bishop and the *Observer* must now settle between them:—they are clearly at issue on the point. If there be any meaning in his Lordship's note, he has put it on record with his own hand, that he *was not justified*, by facts, in what he said of the spirit of the country: this he learnt in the course of his Visitation. But the *Observer* seems to be of opinion, that a Bishop ought never to acknowledge himself to have been mistaken; that having once said a thing, however erroneous, he is bound to maintain it, for the dignity of his station; and that if he should confess the weakness of fallibility, it becomes all true worshippers of the mitre to stand forward and defend him, in spite of himself!

The *Examiner* had remarked, we think very justly, on the priestcraft implied in the Bishop's assumption, that all Clergymen, episcopally ordained, are peculiarly "appointed by God to be His stewards, for the effectual administration of holy mysteries, blessed sacraments, and other means of grace;" coupled with the assertion of a Clergyman, in a sermon preached before his Lordship and published at his command, that "all *rightly-ordained* Ministers are under the especial guidance of the Holy Spirit." What says the *Observer* to this? He does not attempt to vindicate these pretensions from the charge of priestcraft; or to evade the obvious conclusion, that a gross insult is hereby cast upon the millions of British Christians, (including our dearly beloved brethren the Methodists,) whose ministers are *not* episcopally ordained, by representing them as destitute of the effectual administration of religious ordinances. But he puts forth the irrelevant truism, that "most well regulated sects of Christians have ministers set apart, and dedi-



cated to the duties of religion." What has this to do with it? May not ministers be set apart from secular employments, ordained and dedicated to the duties of religion, without any one sect assuming that they are hereby put under the especial guidance of the Holy Spirit, and made exclusively stewards of God, for the effectual administration of holy mysteries? We are not ashamed to class ourselves amongst those "rude people," of whom the *Examiner* speaks; for we say boldly, that this is "priestcraft addressing itself to superstition." As an illustration of the indecorum of such pretensions, the *Examiner* supposes a case, which no one will maintain to be entirely fictitious; namely, that a young man, "gay, fashionable, and worldly minded," enters into the ministry of the Church, solely "in compliance with the wishes of his family," and to "obtain a respectable livelihood." What says the *Observer* to this? He does not deny the possibility, or the occasional occurrence, of such a case. But he contents himself with affirming, that the blame of such a man's being inducted into the ministry does not rest with the Bishop. Who has said that it does? The *Examiner* has insinuated no such thing. But, though the Bishop is bound to induct the incumbent presented to him, (unless there be a *legal* objection,) perhaps some little blame may attach to a Bishop, or to any other man who, knowing that such persons are occasionally found in the Church, maintains the unseemly assumption, that they are God's appointed stewards for the administration of holy mysteries, and are under the especial guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is the real subject of examination, which the *Observer*, as usual, endeavours to keep out of view.

Next comes the "great and complicated system of tithes." The *Observer* says, that the *Examiner* is compelled to give up the point of a four-fold distribution of tithes. In the first place, we do not see how a man can very well be said to give up that which he has never maintained; and, in the second place, on turning to the pamphlet, it does not appear to us that the *Examiner* has expressed any doubt, that at some periods, and in some countries, there has been a four-fold division of tithes. He merely admits, that there does not seem to be sufficient evidence of tithes in *England* having ever been allotted precisely in this way, but that rather a three-fold division

prevailed here ; which is quite as much to the purpose, as far as regards any question between the public and the Clergy concerning the just appropriation of tithes. We are moreover told, that the *Examiner* has quoted, as his authority for this opinion respecting tithes, a law of King Ethelred. This is a most unfair representation. The fact is, that the *Examiner*, not thinking it desirable, we suppose, to load his pages with quotations, has referred his readers to a pamphlet, entitled, "A Legal Argument, shewing that Tithes are the Property of the Public, and of the Poor, by W. Eagle, Esq., Barrister-at-Law" ;—in which, as he says, (and we entirely agree with him,) there are to be found legal and historical proofs of this appropriation of tithes which no man can effectually controvert. With respect to the particular law of Ethelred, the *Observer* says that he shall pass it over as "apocryphal !" It is difficult to conjecture what he can mean by this, if it be any thing more than a poor evasion. The law is to be found at length in the original Saxon, with a Latin translation, in David Wilkins's standard work, "*Leges Anglo-Saxonicae Ecclesiasticae et Civiles*," p. 133 :—not a doubt, that we can discover, has ever been entertained of its authenticity ;—it is no more "apocryphal" than the Reform Bill. The *Examiner* has shewn, that certain inferences, drawn by the Bishop of Exeter from other laws, are gratuitous and untenable. The *Observer* says, cavalierly, that he shall "pass over this reasoning as puerile and weak." We commend his prudence. It was the most advisable course he could have adopted. To call your adversary's argument "puerile and weak," is always easy enough ;—to prove it such may be troublesome. We are assured by the *Observer* that "very little research into ecclesiastical history is necessary to prove that the writer's assertion respecting tithes and church property in general, is without the slightest foundation." It is a pity, since so "little research" is necessary, that the *Observer* has not condescended to employ it ;—but his pages contain no evidence that he has ever seen an ecclesiastical history.\*

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\* We should be sorry to appear tedious on this subject ; but there are one or two testimonies which we cannot resist the temptation of laying before the *Observer*. In the "*Excerptiones*" of Egbert, Archbishop of York, being an arranged selection from the most ancient decrees and

The *Examiner* is next charged with "an unfounded calumny, invented for the basest of party purposes," in having said that the present discontents arise from the extravagant pretensions of the Clergy, as to their mode of exacting the payment of their tithes. The candid reader may see, by turning to the "Brief Examination," that this is altogether a gross and manifest perversion of the author's meaning. He has not said one syllable about any extravagant behaviour of the Clergy, *in the present exaction of their tithes*; nor has he ascribed the present discontent about tithes to any conduct of the Clergy, good, bad, or indifferent. What he has really said, is, that it was the extravagant pretensions of the Clergy, "in setting up a claim of original, indefeasible, divine right to every particle of tithe in the country," which "first provoked an appeal" to the historical facts concerning the former charitable appropriation of tithes. No person of intelligence will deny that this statement is correct; but it is a statement totally different from that which the *Observer* has thought proper to charge upon the *Examiner*.

We are then told, that the Unitarian Minister has displayed such "gross ignorance," as cannot be passed over without notice; because, forsooth, he has asked, "In whom are the Revenues of the Church vested between the death of one incumbent and the appointment of another?" "Every person," says the *Observer*, "who has served the office of Churchwarden, could tell him that they are se-

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canons of the church, composed about the year 750,—there is the following regulation:—"Ut ipsi sacerdotes a populis suscipiant decimas, et nomina eorum quicunque dederint scripta habeant, et secundum auctoritatem Canoniam coram timentibus dividant; et ad ornamentum Ecclesiae primam eligant partem; secundam autem ad usum pauperum atque peregrinorum, per eorum manus misericorditer cum omni humilitate, dispensent; tertiam vero sibi met ipsis sacerdotes reservent."

In the "*Canons of Ælfric*," printed from a very ancient Saxon manuscript, in the library of Corpus Christi College, and assigned by Spelman to about the year 1052, there is to be found the following: "Sancti etiam patres statuerunt, ut Ecclesiae Dei decimas suas quique conferant, tradanturque eae sacerdoti, qui easdem in tres distribuat portiones; unam ad Ecclesiae reparationem; alteram pauperibus erogandam; tertiam vero Ministris Dei qui Ecclesiam ibi curant."

These passages, with the proper evidence of their authenticity, may be seen in Spelman's "*Concilia*," Londini, fol. pp. 259, 578. It is not the flippant assertions of such a writer as the *Observer*, that can overthrow these testimonies.

questrated,—that is, held by the Churchwardens in trust, and handed over to the new incumbent." There is not the slightest reason to suppose that the *Examiner* was ignorant of so notorious a fact; on the contrary, it is virtually recognised and alluded to in the "Brief Examination." The question, as every impartial reader will perceive, was not put in ignorance, but in confidence, as a mode of affirming that tithes *are treated by the law as public property*, held in trust for public uses.

The *Examiner* has affirmed, that "at the council of Antioch, (A.D. 340,) in allowing the Bishops to manage the funds of the Churches, it was stipulated that they, and the Clergy who dwelt with them, should take no more for their own use than what was absolutely necessary." On this passage we are favoured with a perfect specimen of the *Observer's* most reckless spirit of contradiction. "I affirm," he says, "that *there never was a council at Antioch*; the premises, therefore, being proved (*proved!*) to be false, the whole argument, of course, falls to the ground." Of course it does; there being only this little obstacle in the way of our *Observer's* triumph,—namely, that the assertion, which he has made with so much boldness, is not only gratuitous, but utterly false. So common a book as Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," (vol. iii. p. 364,) might have taught him that there *was* a council at Antioch, about the period referred to. It was held in the reign of Constantius, that Emperor himself presiding at it in person, and there being 97 Bishops assembled. The curious reader may see the original account of this council in "*Socratis Historia Ecclesiastica*," Lib. ii. c. 10. The Creeds and Canons, agreed upon at this council, exist in Latin, and may be seen at large in a valuable work, entitled "*Centuriæ Magdeburgenses*. Basil, 1560." In Du Pin's Ecclesiastical History also, the substance of the Creeds and Canons may be found.

"The 24th provides for the preservation of the church-lands : it gives the management of them to the bishops ; but it ordains that the priests (presbyters) shall take cognizance of the lands of the church, lest after the death of the bishop his heirs seize upon them.

"The last regulates the uses to which the bishop should apply the revenue of the church : it ordains that he shall dispose of them *for the good of the poor and of stran-*

“gers ; and that he shall be content with necessities, according to the command of the Apostle St. Paul ; that he shall not keep the remainder to himself ; that he shall not give it to his brethren or his children ; but that he shall distribute it according to the advice of the priests and deacons ; that if he does not do it he shall be accountable to the Synod of the Province ;—and lastly, that if the Priests and the Bishop be accused of conspiring together to appropriate to themselves the Ecclesiastical Revenues, the Synod shall examine the accusation, and shall punish them if it be found true.”—*Du Pin*, English Translation ; London, 1692, fol. Vol. 1, p. 258.

The only error we can perceive in the *Examiner's* statement, is, that he has given the date of the council 340, whereas it appears to have been held in the following year, 341 :—but this error the *Observer* has not detected ; it was not likely that he would, contenting himself, as he appears to have done, with unsupported contradiction of whatever did not suit him, and referring merely to *Chambers's Dictionary*. Let the candid reader now judge, whether the *Examiner's* “premises being proved to be false, the whole argument, of course, falls to the ground.” We know it may still be said, by one disposed to cavil, that the decrees of this council are worthless, as it was held when the Emperor and the Church were under the influence of the heretical Arians. This, however, does not in the slightest degree affect the purpose for which the acts of the council have been referred to :—they are not referred to as authority on points of orthodox doctrine, but as historical evidence of a certain mode of appropriating Church funds in early times.

The *Examiner* is next severely rebuked for having introduced the “solitary instance” of the burning of Joan Bocher, in 1551, “as a pretext for misleading the ignorant, and exciting vulgar clamour against the Establishment, in 1834.” All this again is sheer invention of the *Observer*. There is not one word in the “Brief Examination” about Joan Bocher, or 1551, or any other special period and instance of persecution. We verily believe that these particulars were not in the *Examiner's* mind. He has merely said, in the way of general expression, that “there was a time when the Church imprisoned



non-conformists, burnt heretics, and took a tenth of the profits of all labour;"—and this, not with any apparent view to raise a "vulgar clamour against the Establishment in 1834," but simply to illustrate the general position, that it is only gradually, with the progress of liberty and knowledge amongst the people, that the Church has learnt to demean herself mildly,—a position which we do not expect to see controverted.

We are next told by the *Observer*, that "the attack on the Universities is equally reprehensible." "Idleness and vice," he says, "will creep into the best regulated establishments, but it is never winked at, or passed over in silence, in our Universities." Invention again! There is not a syllable in the "*Brief Examination*," which can be fairly construed into an attack on the Universities; the author has not even hinted at the existence of such evils as idleness and vice in those learned establishments. He has merely said, that if *probation* be thought necessary in students for the Ministry, (as the Bishop intimates,) it might be better to encourage exercises in preaching and praying at Oxford and Cambridge, than to leave it till the Clergyman enters upon the active duties of his profession as a Curate.

Then follow some observations on the subject of popular education, and on the "Bell's" or "National Schools." Here the *Observer*, with his usual propensity for blundering, has confounded the *Examiner* with the Edinburgh Reviewer, attributing to the former a note and a story which are expressly quoted from the latter. He says, also, that "it savours strongly of malice and impertinence" in the *Examiner*, to have found any fault at all with these schools, they being entirely supported by the private and voluntary contributions of members of the Establishment. Then, why are they impertinently called "National" Schools, and everlastingly extolled by the Clergy as perfect models of a national education? It was not to be expected, that the gross defects of these institutions would be acknowledged by so devoted a son of the Church. It is enough for our consolation, that these defects are daily becoming apparent to far more enlightened and influential people. Lord Brougham has again shewn himself alive to this important subject; and we recommend the *Observer* to peruse his Lordship's late speech before the House of

Peers, if he wishes to see an exquisite delineation of the true policy of the Clergy and the Church in this matter.

We reach at length the observations respecting Unitarians and Unitarianism. Here, of course, the *Observer* deals bountifully in all that misrepresentation, bigotry, prejudice, and slander, which it is the popular vice of the self-styled orthodox, in the present day, to level against our sect. He insists that the Bishop had good reasons for censuring us as he has done, (though it should be borne in mind, as acknowledged in the " Brief Examination," that the Bishop's Charge is eminently free from all this low-minded and iniquitous abuse,) " well knowing," says the *Observer*, " that under one name is comprised an anomalous mixture of heresies, from that of Ebion and Arius, to that of the poor conceited wretches who call themselves free-thinking Christians, and even of the abandoned followers of Taylor and Carlisle." No doubt that, under one name with Unitarians, are sometimes comprised Deists, Atheists, and even all sorts of " abandoned" people. But comprised by whom? by such men as the *Observer*, who can find no more effectual way in which to exhibit their ignorance or their malignity. We are perfectly satisfied, that the Bishop of Exeter himself, whatever may be his foibles, has no such evil disposition as this: he will feel unspeakably ashamed of this specimen of his Clergy, if the author be a Clergyman. The best, if not the only direct answer, to the errors of Taylor and Carlisle, was written by a Unitarian Minister. (See " Letters on the Evidences of Christianity," addressed to those persons, by the Rev. J. R. Beard.) When the *Observer* shall have done as much, in defence of Revelation against the attacks of unbelievers, we shall have a higher opinion of him than we entertain at present; but even then he will not be entitled to abuse his betters.

We are now favoured with a reiterated assertion of the Vice-Chancellor's accusations, (*crambe recoccta* with a vengeance!) in his " luminous exposition" in the case of Lady Hewley's charity. The *Examiner* knows, we are told, that the Unitarians have circulated a " garbled and misinterpreted translation of the scriptures"; and that they have " gradually possessed themselves of funds and endowments" which belong to the orthodox. He knows, indeed, that these acts are charged against Unitarians;

and that in the present temper of the religious world, there are too many persons, like the *Observer*, eager from credulousness or enmity to receive and propagate them. He knows, however, that they are false, and that they have been often and recently confuted. But, alas ! simple indeed must be the man who can expect that, when a clamour is raised against an unpopular sect, the *proof* will be followed by the *belief* and *acknowledgment* of their innocence.

The *Observer* next indulges in a sneer at the allusion made in the "Brief Examination" to the greater prevalence of Unitarian sentiments in America. He says, "so long as the *respectable part* of the community there embrace our, or similar doctrines, the *Examiner* is perfectly welcome to the enlightened inhabitants of the *prie*rie of Messrs. Birkbeck and Flower." Is this ignorance, or is it impertinence? Is it possible the *Observer* should not know, that the Unitarians of America are amongst the most respectable, wealthy, intelligent, and influential people in the States; that is not in the back settlements, but in the New England States, especially in the city of Boston, the most enlightened portion of the Union, that our doctrines are professed; that there are hundreds of Unitarian congregations, with settled, educated Ministers, and flourishing societies? He hints, in a note, that we may go to America if we like it. Doubtless: he and his brethren would be happy to get rid of us. We give him full notice, however, that, go who will, *we* mean to stay in Old England, whilst there is bread to eat; and whilst we have a tongue or a pen to use, shall continue to labour, in our humble way, for the reformation of our beloved country, in Church and State.

"One cannot but smile," then remarks the *Observer*, "at the dexterity with which the writer has endeavoured to enlist on his side, not only the highest legal authority in the realm, but even some of the Prelates of the Church. Of the religious sentiments of the first," (the Lord Chancellor,) "I believe the writer knows as little as I do." O rare Invention! thou art at thy work again. Will the reader credit it,—there is not the slightest attempt made, in the "Brief Examination," to insinuate that Lord Brougham is a Unitarian, or any thing approaching it, any more than though the writer had been speaking of Lord

Eldon ;—there is not the least allusion to his sentiments, religious or political. All that is said about him, is, that he once designed to establish a system of National Education ; and that it is hoped he will renew the endeavour. With respect to the Prelates, (Drs. Whately and Maltby,) it is only said of them, that they have advocated those rational views, as opposed to popular errors, for which Unitarian writers had contended before them. We are ready to uphold the truth of this statement, whenever the *Observer* shall display his competence to dispute it.

The *Examiner* had exposed the weakness of the Bishop of Exeter's objection to the title of *Unitarians*, as applied exclusively to those who reject the doctrine of the Trinity. The *Observer* assures us, that the Bishop is not singular in entertaining this objection. We knew that. He tells us, that he "has recently heard a most respectable Independent Minister express himself to the same purpose." Very likely he may. But if all the Bishops, and all the Independent Ministers in the kingdom should combine, they cannot justify arrant nonsense. The *Examiner*, we think, has shown that the term Unitarian is necessarily and simply opposed in its meaning to Trinitarian,—that it does not signify, and never was intended to signify, a professed believer in one God, but a believer in the *personal unity* of God, as distinguished from those who hold that the Godhead consists of three co-equal persons. For Trinitarians to claim the title of Unitarian, therefore, is absurd ; it is, as Sir Edward Sugden would say, like calling themselves French Englishmen.

We have now done with the *Observer* and his observations. Unless the champions of the Church as it is, can produce something better than this against the "Brief Examination," we may safely congratulate the author of that pamphlet, upon the success of his endeavours to shew the fallacy of certain positions maintained in the Bishop of Exeter's Charge.

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

Our retrospect of public proceedings for the last month, is on the whole satisfactory and cheering. Justice and liberty, in ecclesiastical and religious concerns, are making decided progress.

What has become of the Dissenters' Marriage Bill, or what is to be further done respecting it,—whether Lord John Russell and Dr. Lushington are still endeavouring to frame a measure that shall please all parties, or the Government mean to abandon the attempt altogether,—we cannot exactly divine,—*nec scire fas est omnia*.

*Admission of Dissenters to the Universities.*—This subject appears likely to cause a strong contention between the friends of liberal reformation, and the fanatical or interested supporters of episcopalian monopoly. A counter petition to that of which we spoke in our last number, has been presented to the House of Lords, by the Duke of Gloucester, Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, and to the House of Commons, by Mr. Goulburn. In the Lords, the Bishop of Exeter performed, for the first time this season, his old part of Champion-general for the worst of abuses; and his performance was honoured with a well-merited criticism from the Lord Chancellor. That eminently *discreet* Prelate, not satisfied with any moderate degree of absurdity, must needs take upon him to defend the jesuitical notion, that subscription to articles of faith, does not by any means imply that you either understand or believe them, but only that you are a member of the Church that imposes them!

In the Commons on the 17th of April, Col. Williams brought forward his motion for an address to the crown, that the King would be pleased to signify his pleasure to the Universities in favour of an abandonment of their present regulations. This, after an animated debate, was superseded by an amendment, proposed by Mr. G. W. Wood, asking leave to introduce a Bill for the same object. Mr. Wood's amendment was carried by a majority of 141,—185 against 44,—and we observe that the Bill has been read a first time. That it will pass the Commons, unless the object should be previ-



ously attained in some other way, may with safety be inferred from the large majority already pledged in its favour. Whether, even in that case, it would pass the Lords, may be reasonably doubted. But it is impossible, after such an expression of opinion in the popular branch of the Legislature, that the present restrictions should much longer continue.

*Church Rates.*—The Chancellor of the Exchequer has proposed his scheme for the abolition of Church rates. It is of a kindred character with the Marriage Bill ; a sort of half-measure ; weak, awkward, and unsatisfactory to all parties. The rates, as at present imposed, are to be entirely abolished, in reference to Churchmen as well as Dissenters ; and in lieu of them, the sum of £250,000. per annum is to be charged upon the land-tax of the country, and to be expended by the Commissioners for building Churches. This is understood to be exclusively for maintaining the *fabric* of the church. The incidental expenses of divine worship are to be borne by the rector or lay impropriator ; in return for which, these parties are to be exempted from certain charges, to which they are now subject, for repairing the chancel of the church. It will be seen, at once, that this measure can never satisfy Dissenters in point of *principle* :—it is, in fact, little more than changing the *form* of the imposition of which they complain. If the general taxation of the country is to be chargeable with the expenses of episcopalian worship, it is plain that Dissenters will still be obliged to pay for the religion of Churchmen, which they disapprove. In one respect they will be worse off than they are now ; they will no longer have the least controul over the Church rates by their votes in vestry, but the whole will be expended by an irresponsible body of Commissioners.—Lord Althorp secured a majority of 116 ; but we still reckon, with some confidence, on the defeat of the measure.

*Poor Laws.*—The alterations in the Poor Laws proposed by Government, are, with a few exceptions perhaps, most just and enlightened. Every true philanthropist will rejoice, that our present degrading and demoralising system is about to be amended.

## LEWINSMEAD SOCIAL MEETING.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—Some of your readers may recollect seeing in the Unitarian Chronicle, rather more than two years since, a report of the proceedings of our First Social Meeting of the Lewinsmead Congregation, on the evening of the Fast Day, 1832. This was the commencement of our social assemblies; and though in many respects the day of small things, will ever be remembered with interest by those who shared in its pleasures, as the promise of better things to come. The design originated with a Friend, young, ardent, and persevering, who has ever given proofs of zealous, fearless attachment to the cause of pure vital Christianity;—though still “of us,” he is not now ‘among’ us; but he will hear, with feelings of no ordinary gratification, of the unexampled success resulting from his benevolent plan; no higher reward will be desire or need. At that meeting, about 50 individuals of our congregation partook of tea together, and at a subsequent meeting on the Good Friday following, it was resolved to hold them annually, and on that day Our numbers were now considerably increased, and success was no longer a matter of doubt. Hitherto these meetings had been confined to one sex alone, but as the experiment had proved eminently successful, it was unanimously resolved to invite the ladies in future to share the proceedings. At this year’s meeting, the attendance of ladies and gentlemen was numerous beyond all former precedent. Friends were present from Bath, Bridgwater, Marshfield, Trowbridge, and Warminster; and it was feared that our Infant School Room, ample as its dimensions are, would not suffice for the comfortable accommodation of all. This difficulty was surmounted by the ready and cheerful good humour of our venerable senior pastor, Dr Carpenter. Nearly 220 individuals were thus brought together. The tea service being removed, the whole of the friends present, by the addition of a few forms, were enabled to partake, in one room, of the succeeding intellectual feast; and it was a noble and animating sight to witness so many assembled for the purpose of religious festivity, (I think the term may be allowed,) and all with an evident desire to seek not their own, but another’s comfort.

The place of meeting was ornamented with portraits of the worthies of our faith, and the champions of religious liberty, which spoke eloquently to the heart, awakened in many bosoms a responsive chord to the noble feelings which animated *their* generous exertions for the happiness of the human race, and served to fan that flame in the minds of others, which burnt with so pure and bright a light in their own.

G. Webb Hall, Esq., of Sneyd Park, near this city, was unanimously called to the chair, and presided with all the tact and knowledge of business, for which he is so eminently distinguished. Mr. H. in a very powerful and energetic speech, set forth the principles of our faith as Unitarians, and our reasons for thus meeting together;

and made many judicious remarks on passing events as connected with Unitarianism and dissent. The address was marked by a spirit of love, and a sound mind, and was throughout warmly applauded. A number of excellent sentiments were given from the chair, which called up several speakers. Rev. Dr. Carpenter, after some admirable general observations on the present state and future prospects of Unitarianism, gave a luminous sketch of the various local institutions connected with the Lewinsmead congregation, and shewed them all to be worthy of attention and support. Rev. J. Tingcombe paid a tribute of affectionate remembrance to the memories of Belsham and Priestley. Rev. J. Murch, of Bath, acknowledged for himself and friends, the high gratification they had experienced at the warm welcome given to them by their brethren of Bristol, and drew a very pleasing picture of the present state of Unitarianism in Bath. Rev. J. Bayley, of Warminster, furnished some satisfactory details of the success of his ministry in that town and at Devonport; and Rev. R. B. Aspland, in a speech of uncommon power and excellence, eloquently defended modern Presbyterians from some recent foul and libellous attacks on their character; and glancing at the history and sufferings of Unitarians in former ages, exhorted those of the present day not to slack or tire in their course, from a full assurance that the great truths we prize so highly, must ere long become the one faith of the whole earth. The meeting was also addressed by Messrs. Browne, Carpenter, Lang, and other gentlemen, with great force and energy. The meeting separated about 10, delighted with the proceedings of the evening, so full of harmony, kindly feeling, and christian cheerfulness.

A highly interesting discourse was preached in the morning by our respected pastor, the Rev Brook Aspland, from 23rd chap of Luke, 50th to 66th verses, on the facts connected with the burial of Christ. The eloquent preacher dwelt with great force of argument on the connection between the facts of the history and the prophetic declarations of scripture concerning them, and deduced some valuable practical inferences from the gospel narratives, well fitted to promote serious and profitable meditation on the place where the Lord lay.

I trust, Sir, this communication will not be deemed tedious. My mind has been so full of these proceedings, that greater brevity has scarcely been practicable. Permit me, ere I conclude, to make one remark. These social tea meetings strike me to be, of all others, the best calculated for the promotion of a spirit of conviviality and union among ourselves, and viewed in this light they are infinitely superior to our old expensive dinners, with their toasts and feverish excitement.

With best wishes for the success of the Gospel Advocate, I remain, with respect, Sir, yours' obediently,

Bristol.

S. G.

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## SOMERSET AND DORSET UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

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The half-yearly Meeting of this Association was held at Ilminster, on Friday, March 28th. The introductory services of the morning were conducted by the Rev. John Jenkins, of Yeovil, and the Rev. S. Walker, of Crewkerne; and an impressive discourse on Rev. 1. c. 18 v., was delivered by the Rev. Wm. James, of Bridgwater. After the morning services, the usual business of the Association was transacted. The Rev. E. Whitfield resigned the office of Secretary. A vote of thanks was passed, expressive of the sentiments of the Meeting on the attention which Mr. Whitfield had given to the interests of the Association, and their regret that they were about to be deprived of his services as Secretary. Mr. Jenkins was then appointed to discharge the duties of that office. About 40 of the supporters and friends of the Association dined together—John Baker, Esq., in the Chair. Among the many interesting subjects brought before the Meeting, that of the York College claims particular notice. The remarks tending to shew the necessity of Unitarians supporting that Institution, received the warmest support of the Meeting. The preacher in the evening was the Rev. Robert Cree, of Bridport, who delivered an excellent discourse on 2nd Cor. 13 c. 14 v.. “For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God.” The religious services were attended by large and attentive audiences, and the proceedings of the day were calculated to excite interest and zeal in the cause of free enquiry and religious truth. The next Meeting will be held at Yeovil, September 17th, when the Rev. E. Whitfield, of Ilminster, will be the preacher

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## TO SUBSCRIBERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

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*Owing to the length of several articles, which we were unwilling to abridge, we have given 4 extra pages in the present number. The Address of Mr. Odgers, on behalf of the congregation at Devonport, was actually in type, but we have been obliged to postpone it until next month, when it shall appear, without fail. Dr. Carpenter's paper on the Events of the Resurrection of Christ, has been received, and shall gladly have insertion in our next. The communications of R. S. A., of “A consistent Unitarian,” and of W. C. London, have come to hand.*

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# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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## PROGRESSIVE CHARACTER OF THE DIVINE WAYS.

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THE ways of God, in nature and providence, are found to possess certain general characters. By careful observation, we can trace and distinguish these characters, throughout whatever is done by Divine power and wisdom, whether amongst material and visible things, or in the events and changes of the moral world. Indeed, both natural philosophy and moral wisdom consist, in a great measure, of extensive and accurate observations of this kind. We first mark what are called the laws of nature,—the peculiar and uniform conditions under which the various phenomena of nature take place;—and then, by a still further generalization of our views, less nice perhaps, but more extensive, we arrive at the knowledge of these fixed characters. We see that God does all things *in certain ways*, which we can discriminate sufficiently to enable us to give them appropriate names.

For instance, the ways of God, in nature and providence, are characterized by *uniformity*. In one sense, indeed, there is boundless variety in the works of Heaven. The number and diversity of the objects that we behold have no conceivable limits. No two of the great members of the universe, as we may term them, are exactly alike; the sun is not like the moon; no other planet entirely resembles the earth; and “one star differeth from another star in glory.” And when we examine the furniture of our own world, we discover that the multiplicity, the diversity of objects, is infinite. Yet we attribute uniformity to all the dealings of the Most High. The phenomena of nature, and to a great degree, likewise, the moral events of life, take place according to a certain fixed and uniform order. We find that the succession of causes and effects is regular,—not changeable and capricious. The same things produce the same things,—the same combination of circumstances is followed by the same results,—throughout



nature. This is a happy consideration for us, the living and intelligent creatures of God. It is the foundation of all our philosophy, and all our experience. If it were not for this uniformity in the laws of external nature, we could not tell how to apply the productions of nature to our benefit, nor how to preserve ourselves for a single hour from danger and destruction. If it were not for a similar uniformity in the operation of moral causes, there could be no wisdom, no prudence, no virtue of any kind.

So again, the ways of God, in nature and providence, are characterized by mutual and universal *connection*. The further we extend our researches, by means of scientific observation and study, the more we find that throughout every department of nature, all things are mutually related and connected. Sun, moon, and planets, attract and influence each other. Animals subsist on vegetables, or on one another. Both are affected in their numbers, their propagation, their healthfulness, in all their circumstances, by the regular and irregular vicissitudes of the seasons. There is here also the same character to be observed in the events of the moral, and social, and spiritual world. History is not a mere catalogue of isolated occurrences, but the record of a connected series and succession of events, the latter being determined by the preceding:—at least, every one will admit that this is what history *would* be, if it could be rendered perfect. The misery or happiness of one man is interwoven with the condition of another. The prosperity or ruin of communities is often greatly influenced by the conduct of individuals. In short, mutual *connection* is one of the most remarkable characteristics of the works and ways of the Almighty.

These examples, then, of uniformity and of mutual connection, may serve to illustrate what we mean, by saying that there are certain general characters belonging to the works and ways of God. The immediate subject of this article is, the PROGRESSIVE CHARACTER of the Divine ways, in nature and providence.

It must appear to all who have well considered the subject, that every thing which God performs, (if we may so express ourselves,) as the Creator and providential Governor of the world, is accomplished by a *process*. The development, the completion of his designs, is *progressive*. The wise and beneficial results, which we see that

he has most evidently planned, are brought about gradually, through the instrumentality of means, by operations, which take a longer or shorter measure of time for their accomplishment. We are not sure of this being absolutely necessary, from the nature of things, in the ways of an infinite Being. We cannot tell but that God might, had it been his sovereign pleasure, have commanded all things *to be* at once, without the necessity of any process, what it was his will that they should be finally. Perhaps this may appear to us, in some points of view, the most natural and proper mode of proceeding in a Creator whose word, whose will, is believed to be Almighty. Yet there are not wanting some considerations, which seem to afford us no little insight into the wisdom of God in ordaining it otherwise. But these are matters of high and difficult speculation, on which we ought not to look for perfect knowledge. All that we really know on the subject, is, that God has been pleased to effect his purposes, in nature and providence, not instantaneously, but progressively.

We must be permitted to say a very few words, on the striking confirmation which this truth appears to be receiving from some late discoveries in regard to the structure of this globe. Philosophers have examined the materials of which the crust of the earth is composed;—and they seem to meet there with abundant evidence, that the earth has undergone repeated changes, and that gradually, *progressively*, it has been brought into its present state. Creatures that once inhabited the world, whose remains are found embedded in the bowels of the earth, no longer exist in any part of it. On the contrary, no traces of many of the creatures which now people sea and land are to be met with, in these natural records of past eras of the earth's existence. It is remarkable, however, that upon the whole there is a decided *progression* in the *rank* of the creatures which seem to have peopled the world successively; as well as in the fitness of the state of the earth itself for the support of vegetable and animal life. There is every reason to believe that the calmest, and most fruitful, and altogether most delightful state, in which the earth has ever existed, is that in which it exists now. There is reason to believe that the greatest variety of creatures, the noblest kinds of creatures, that ever inhabited this globe, are those which now dwell throughout its fertile

hills and plains, and among its tranquil waters. Here, therefore, there has been progression,—progression towards good,—in the ways of the Creator.

But we turn to more familiar instances of this truth. What is there in all nature that is not brought to its ultimate state progressively? Look to the wonders of the vegetable world. All its phenomena are processes; all which it furnishes that is useful and beautiful, has *grown* into the state in which we admire and value it. Look also to the animal creation; the same law universally prevails. We are not born with all our attributes and faculties in their highest condition: but become what we are by a gradual developement of our physical powers. The young of most creatures are feeble and helpless; and in no case, we presume, are they entirely what they may and do become, in subsequent periods of their existence.

There is the same character stamped on all that is intellectual and moral in the works of God. Mind and character are formed progressively, as much so as trees and animals. Every man is conscious that his present thoughts, views, dispositions, hopes and prospects, have not always belonged to him, nor come upon him by any sudden inspiration, but have *grown* upon him, as it were, from the experience of life. There assuredly is, in the spiritual parts of human nature, a great capacity for progressive improvement; and all the general circumstances of our lives seem to be wonderfully ordered for assisting the developement of this capacity. Here, therefore, we also meet with progression,—progression towards good,—in the ways of the universal Creator.

If we direct our attention to what are commonly designated “the ways of Providence,” the same truth will be forced upon our conviction. The dealings of God with his intelligent offspring, the rational inhabitants of the earth, in ordering all those events by which their prosperity and happiness are most widely affected, seem to be characterized by the same general tendency to accomplish great designs progressively. We must take comprehensive views, and look to great results, in order to form a correct judgment on this subject. We must remember that there are two modes of progression;—the one by a steady and uniformly advancing course, like the stream of some majestic river;—the other by a succession of onward

and backward movements, but each onward movement advancing farther than the last, like the waves of the sea when the tide is flowing. The progress is as real in the one way as in the other;—but in the latter case, it will require more patient and lengthened observation to detect it. Now, the advancement of society, both as to the state of particular nations, and as to the state of the world at large, is very much of the latter description. It is conducted by impulses and checks, like the advance of the tide upon the sea shore, not like the course of a river in its channel. This recollection may teach us how to conduct our observations, in order to judge of the progress of society. We must take considerable intervals of time into view at once, and mark the difference at each period; just as a doubtful and inexperienced observer might set up a mark on the sea-shore, and return to it in an hour, to discover if the tide was advancing or receding. Can we doubt, that there is more knowledge in the world, and a diffusion of that knowledge amongst a greater number of minds,—can we doubt, that there is a more settled state of moral principles, and a more sincere and general observance of moral duties,—in the present condition of the world than in its condition a thousand years since?

In the last place, we shall find this truth further illustrated, if we attend carefully to the *moral dispensations* of God; we mean, those especial dispensations of his mercy, by which it is our belief that he has, “at sundry times and in divers manners,” interfered in the affairs of his rational creatures, to promote the knowledge and influence of true religion. There is in this series of events the clearest marks of a progressive character. The patriarchal dispensation was clearly intended to prepare the race of Abraham for the reception of the law of Moses, as a peculiar people preserved from idolatry to worship the only true God. If there were any previous revelations of truth and duty to mankind, they doubtless had the same design. “The law,” says the apostle Paul, “was our school-master to bring us unto Christ.” The Gospel is surely a realization of the hope which the ancient Church of God entertained,—the hope of better things to come. It is a covenant established on better promises than that of Moses. Its truths are more pure and ennobling. Its actual influence upon the moral

condition of the world, has already been immeasurably greater. May we not rely, therefore, on the justness of the sentiment which some of the wisest of Christians have advocated,—“that all Divine Revelation is a plan for educating the human race to goodness and greatness; that all the measures of the Government of the Almighty Father, with regard to his especial dispensations of wisdom and holiness, are intended to lead onwards to some more advanced state of moral and spiritual perfection amongst his intelligent offspring?” This view assigns to Revelation a just resemblance to all the other designs and operations of its Divine Author, which, as we have shewn, are all of a progressive character.

From these views we may derive the most cheering and confident prospects of the future amelioration of society. We may rejoice in the hope of a yet further advancement of mankind in knowledge, in all peaceful and prosperous circumstances, in the increase and distribution of earthly enjoyments, in the blessings of liberty, justice, benevolent attachments, and social intercourse. We may anticipate brighter discoveries in science, greater perfection in all the arts and practices of civilized life, by which the gratifications of man are multiplied a thousand-fold. We may cherish the belief, that all the hurtful prejudices, all the pernicious errors and superstitions, which now beset the minds of men, on subjects of the highest moment, will pass on to that grave of oblivion which has already engulfed so many previous delusions. Why should not these prospects be confidently indulged? Will not God accomplish this good work of his providence, as he does every other, by progressive advancements? If we saw, throughout the natural and moral world, that God perfects all his designs at once, by a simple act of his will, it would then be absurd, unless we had some very especial grounds for such an inference, to imagine it otherwise in respect to the moral and social condition of his human offspring. But seeing, as we do, that such is not the method pursued by the Almighty in any of his works;—seeing that he brings all things to the ultimate state designed for them progressively;—is it not wrong, to doubt of his having similar purposes, or of his proceeding to accomplish them in a similar manner,



towards the human race? Reasoning from analogy, therefore, and at the same time relying on the merciful character of God, and putting our firm trust in the promises of his revealed word,—we may expect the nations of the earth to improve in all which contributes to the dignity and happiness of the race; we may look for a progressive advancement of knowledge, science, liberty, plenty, justice, benevolence, true religion, and happiness the fruit of all. And not only every kind of improvement in the state of this world, but even the immortal glory and blessedness promised to the righteous in another world, so far from appearing impossible, come to wear an aspect of *probability*, when we duly consider this striking characteristic of the ways of our Almighty Parent.

What powerful motives, what sublime encouragement, is afforded by these thoughts, to labour diligently, both for our own personal improvement, and for the benefit of our fellow men. We behold that *progression towards good*, is the law which our benevolent Maker and Ruler has prescribed to himself, in all his dealings with his creatures. Such is the lesson we learn from the contemplation of the past! Such is the hope with which we are permitted, and instructed, to look upon the future! Who, then, will neglect to seize the honour of making himself a “fellow worker together with God,” in a purpose so truly divine?

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#### QUALIFICATIONS AND SUCCESS OF THE FIRST PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL.

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*Concluded from page 378.*

We have briefly described the companions, the friends, whom Jesus summoned to become fishers of men. His declining to ally himself with the powers of the world, his resolute avoidance of every connexion with those who governed public opinion, and his choice of these unpretending, uninfluential men, as the attendants on his ministry and his successors, shew that he confided in the truth of his cause, and felt convinced, that the truth would make its way by its own efforts. To him an alliance with the world presented no advantages; there was no inducement to the formation of such an alliance, except such as truth needed not: there was, on the contrary, great fear that it

would become the means of deteriorating the value of his doctrines, of lessening their authority, and of weakening their influence on the minds of his disciples.

But let us pass on to the remark, that these *fishers of men*, humble as was their origin, and insignificant their influence, effected a mighty change in the moral and religious condition of mankind. After the death of their great leader, they dispersed themselves, or were dispersed by persecution, over the different parts of the civilized world. They carried with them the knowledge of the facts and doctrines of Christianity, which for a time was confined to Palestine, to remote nations, where they zealously laboured to spread it far and wide. In a comparatively short period they had succeeded in planting the Gospel far from the spot on which it had its rise. Opposed with much resolution and obstinacy, by those who were interested in the preservation of established customs, and in retaining privileges secured by antiquity, they triumphed over the opposition. It was in vain that Priests raised the popular cry against them; it was in vain that Kings leagued to destroy them and to obliterate the traces of their foot-steps. All was in vain. They triumphed, till Kings and Priests renounced the religion of their country and of their ancestors, and called themselves by the name of Jesus of Nazareth. The altars of idolatry were deserted—the gods of the heathen were deprived of their worshipers,—the immorality practised under the cloak of religion was laid aside, and many were the converts from the Jewish nation, and still more from the various nations of the Gentile world, who withdrew from the communion to which they had been long attached, and in thus acting, resigned prospects, in a worldly point of view of great value, to the fellowship of the disciples and apostles of their Lord. The fact, that Christianity became the religion of the Roman empire immediately after the close of the third century, proves how successful had been the labours of the Apostles, how complete their triumph over every obstacle which lay in their path, and how extensively the religion they laboured to establish had prevailed in the world. Signal, most signal was their success. Without aid, without power, without patronage, they changed the religious opinions and customs of the civilized world; overturned institutions rendered venerable by

antiquity and deeply rooted in the affections of men ; conquered prejudice the most violent—opposition the most determined—hatred the most deadly. Nor was it merely that they were destitute of the assistance of which we speak. Power and patronage were in league against them ; every engine which art could contrive or malice employ, was put in action to annoy, to circumvent, to terrify. The fiends of persecution were let forth to wring their heart with tortures, or to end by slow degrees and excruciating pangs their life of labour.

There is no event of a similar kind in the annals of mankind—none in which success so far exceeded the means employed to secure it,—no change so great where the agents in effecting it were in a worldly point of view so destitute of support. The spread of Mohammedanism was great and extraordinary ; but can this be put in competition with Christianity ? The one was presented in peace—the other at the point of the sword ; the one was received at the risk of life—the other to preserve it ; this was the triumph of truth and persuasion over prejudice and error—that the triumph of a conquering army determined to convert or exterminate.

If we compare the means with the end—the means so inadequate, the end so complete and astonishing ; if we consider the qualifications of the Apostles for effecting any great and important change in the world, their want of power and influence, and then contemplate in all its extent the mighty reformation of which they were the agents, I see not how we can decline to receive the testimony they give in their writings, or doubt that the power of God seconded their attempts. It seems impossible to account for such things by means merely human. Such extensive, important, and permanent effects, do not follow even the combined exertions of a few moderately talented, unpatronised, and unassisted men. And to believe that the humble disciples of Jesus of Nazareth accomplished so much by their own, in every respect, unassisted efforts—that they thus converted such vast numbers of mankind, gave a decided blow to the idolatry of the civilized world, and erected the magnificent edifice of Christianity on the ruins of the Temples of Jerusalem and Rome, appears to demand a greater exercise of faith than is required by the whole scheme of Christianity.

The first founders of this religion were divinely inspired and divinely supported, and they needed not the aid of man. He with whom is the fountain of truth strengthened their efforts, weak as they were in themselves, and inadequate to the production of the contemplated effects. The aids of his spirit were ten thousand times more efficacious than all the aid which the powerful of the earth could grant them, and with such assistance the cause they had embraced from a conviction of its truth and desire to benefit mankind by supporting it, made a rapid progress—their labours were followed by splendid results. It is to the divine support enjoyed by the Apostles, and to that alone, we must attribute the wonderful alterations which centuries have been perfecting in the moral and religious condition of mankind. It is to that we must attribute our own knowledge of the religion of Christ; for we cannot imagine that it would ever have reached our country and times, had it been taught by the fishermen of Galilee unassisted of God, but rather would have sunk into oblivion as the wonder of the day. W.

## ON THE VALUE OF CHRISTIANITY.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—It is not an uncommon thing to hear it asserted by some, that man needs no other revelation of the being and providence, the perfection and goodness, of his Creator, than that afforded by nature. But such persons forget or overlook the fact, that they are not competent judges in this matter. They do not seem to bear in mind, that their lot has been cast in a land blessed with the knowledge of that volume, which solves the problems visible in creation, dissipates its mysteries, and supplies its deficiencies. They do not consider, that the book of nature would have been, in a great measure, a closed book—a dead letter, had it not been unfolded and vivified by the means of Christianity; and consequently, that much which they imagine is taught by nature, emanates from that source which they profess to deem superfluous.

Let them cast a glance back on the early ages of the world, and ponder on the state of those nations, that were

left to the guidance of unaided reason; let them peruse the works of ancient genius; and do they find that the light of nature was then sufficient to lead men into the paths of truth? No. They behold the most erudite minds trammelled by debasing and galling superstition. Polytheism stares them in the face. They behold intelligent, immortal beings, prostrating themselves before inanimate matter; deifying stocks and stones; worshipping the works of their own hands; and bowing in slavish ignorance before terrors of their own creation. Yet nature bore the same aspect *then*, as it does *now*. The same characters were inscribed on its pages. The "Monarch of the day" shone with equal lustre; the "pale Empress of the night" exhibited the same borrowed charms; the "starry arch" glowed with equal grandeur; the lofty hill and lowly vale displayed the same delightful and varied scenery; "the heavens declared the glory of God, and the firmament shewed his handy work." "The earth was full of his goodness"; yet men perceived it not. And why? because they were left to themselves, they were without that knowledge which is from above. It would be wonderful were it otherwise; for how could unaided reason behold the tempest and hurricane, devastating the fair face of nature, and spreading desolation throughout their course, and regard them as proceeding from the same hand that causes the sun to shine, and the gentle showers to descend, and the earth to yield her increase? How could unaided reason contemplate the wretchedness and misery which exist to so large an extent in the world, and reconcile it with the government of boundless benevolence? or view the immensity of evil that prevails in the moral creation, and conceive of it as compatible with the plans of infinite wisdom? It is Christianity alone that can clear away these seeming contradictions. Here, where nature is dumb, Christianity speaks trumpet-tongued. It proclaims to earth's way-worn and weary pilgrim the existence of a blissful and immortal home, beyond the confines of the tomb, where all the pains and sorrows of time shall be compensated by an eternity of happiness. It unfolds the consoling and joy-inspiring doctrine that all things work together for good; that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." It heralds forth the



magnificent truth, that, however much of suffering, or evil, or apparent confusion, may at present prevail, all is tending to one wise, benevolent, and glorious consummation—the happiness of the human family. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

But let me not be misunderstood. I would not desire in the slightest degree to depreciate human reason,—that noble faculty, that ray of the divinity, which elevates man above the brute, and assimilates him to his Almighty Creator. That it is possible for reason to deduce from the appearances of nature the existence of an intelligent cause, I willingly admit. What I contend for is, that it never could of itself, by searching, have discovered the God of Christianity. It could never have traced out his parental character; his tender mercy; his infinite love; his perfect holiness. Man then needs some better witness than that afforded by nature. Christianity is that witness; it meets his wants; it satisfies that craving after immortality inherent in his breast; it assuages his griefs; it enlarges his views. Its bright discoveries, and sublime prospects, enable him to bear with equanimity the buffets and toils of his lot in life; they cheer him in his course through this chequered state, and support him in the hour of death. Let us not then undervalue so great a blessing; and while we look around us, beneath us, and above us, and adore with reverential awe, the might and power and majesty of the Eternal One, displayed on every side, let us never cease to regard the Bible as the supreme—the noblest gift of our heavenly Father’s love. Let us never forget our deep obligations to the Almighty, for that brighter, purer, and more certain dispensation taught by Jesus Christ; which has unveiled the beauties of nature’s page, and enabled us to gaze with enraptured delight on the vast universe, and trace the God of love in all that meets the ear or eye; in every breath of air, in the harmony of the grove,

“In stars that shine, and flowers that blow,”

in all that lives and moves and breathes; and swelling with emotions of gratitude, let us be ever ready to

———— “Contemplate—enjoy—admire—adore—  
And send sweet thoughts towards heaven.”

## EVENTS OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

Bristol, 7th April, 1834.

SIR,—Some years ago I drew up, for the Friends' Monthly Magazine, a view of the circumstances attending the disclosures of our Lord's Resurrection: this was afterwards inserted in the Christian Reformer, and then published separately. I am still satisfied with that view, in most of its leading features: but having undertaken, about two years ago, to construct a monotessaron, (or single narrative derived from the four Gospels,) of the occurrences of that all-important morning, I found myself unable to discern the coalescence which various harmonists had presumed, between the visit of the women recorded by St. Luke, and that recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark; and I reverted to the opinion that there were two separate parties of women. This, from several considerations, I now regard as by far the most probable; indeed it removes every difficulty. The recent arrival of the anniversary of the resurrection, led me again to renew my monotessaron, and to develope the train of events; and it may be interesting to your readers to review them with me. If you should be of that opinion, you will probably favour me with an insertion of this paper in your next number. I shall not presume upon any acquaintance with my former statements; but shall give what I have now to offer, in that form which may render it most complete in itself, and most useful, probably, to all. If any prefer proceeding at once to the narrative, they may without inconvenience pass over the following

## INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

Matthew, Mark, and John were each in or near Jerusalem when the great event occurred; and each, I doubt not, has given an account of the disclosures of it, as he received it on the day of the resurrection: Luke must have derived his record from the sources explored by him during the period which he spent in Palestine, while Paul was imprisoned in Cæsarea, nearly thirty years after the ministry of Christ.\*

\* This is, in essence, the view which Griesbach takes of the matter; and after him Kuinoel.

MATTHEW (ch. xxviii. 1) specifies two women only, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses;\* and from his summary record it could not be known that Mary Magdalene did not enter the sepulchre, and that she was not one of those to whom Christ appeared as they were going to carry to his disciples the information which the angel had given them. These facts we ascertain from St. John's Gospel alone. Matthew's narrative is obviously derived from the account of some or other of the Roman guard, in connexion with what he had heard from "the other Mary." She, in the eager haste of the first relation, might speak of Mary Magdalene as having gone with her—not mentioning any other; and might give the rest of the account without speaking of Magdalene's separation from the party who came back to Bethany. The Evangelist, in preparing his invaluable Gospel thirty years after the event, states the circumstances in that compressed form in which, at that distance of time, they would naturally present themselves to his mind—accustomed as it obviously was, to concise views of fact, though to a detailed recollection of discourses. Matthew gives an account of the setting of the guard, (with which it is obvious, none of the women were acquainted;) of the circumstances attending the actual resurrection of Christ;† and of his appearance to the women as they were hastening from the sepulchre to tell his disciples. His account of their visit at the sepulchre is so brief, and so connected with the angel's sitting on the stone, that it could not be certainly learnt from it that the words of the heavenly messenger were not, in part at least, uttered out of the sepulchre.‡ The more specific account of Mark supplies the defect of this brevity.

MARK (ch. xvi. 1.) mentions three women—the two

\* I once supposed that "the other Mary" of Matthew, was the sister of Lazarus: but further consideration of the context has shewn this opinion to be erroneous. See ch. xxvii. 56 and 61; and compare Mark xvi. 1. The supposition is, too, less suitable to the facts recorded respecting Mary: see John xii. 7, and xi. 20.

† It is a remarkable and interesting fact, that not one of the Evangelists gives any account of our Saviour's returning to life and coming forth from the tomb. Would any writer of *fiction* have omitted this?

‡ Some of this uncertainty may have originated from the translating of the Gospel into Greek.

Marys mentioned by Matthew, together with Salome, who was the mother of James and John. The mother of Mark, also named Mary, lived at Jerusalem. She was an early believer, as appears from Acts xii. 12; and her house was at that later period, the resort of Apostles and others. Connected as Mark was with Peter, who calls him his "son," it is no unreasonable supposition that Peter might be residing at the house of Mark's mother after the crucifixion; and, if so, John his companion with him, (as appears from John xx. 2); and in this case, Salome also. At any rate, it is clear that Mark's account was derived neither from Mary Magdalene nor from "the other Mary;" and we cannot go wrong, therefore, in referring it to Salome. He narrates their visit to the sepulchre; but, like Matthew, he does not advert to Mary Magdalene's leaving them, on seeing the stone rolled away. He does not allude to the appearance of Christ to the women as they were going to tell the disciples; but he distinctly states that he appeared first to Mary Magdalene.—If Salome separated from the women who went on to Bethany, before *they* saw the Lord, it accounts for Mark's silence.

JOHN's information (ch. xx. 1-18) is confined to what he knew personally or from Mary Magdalene; and this he gives in detail. His narrative is, in consequence, peculiarly full of interest.

LUKE's account is just what might have been derived from Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, (whom he alone mentions,) or from one of her companions; together with some general particulars from other sources. He does not mention the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene, nor that to the other women. Joanna would almost certainly live in or near the palace of Herod; and this, together with the time of purchasing the spices, and above all the diversity in the circumstances at the tomb, decide, in my judgment, that the visit of her party was not the same with that spoken of by the first two Evangelists.

If the reader will look at a map of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, (such, for instance, as that in my Geography of the New Testament,) he will readily enter into the following statement respecting the course of the women who visited the sepulchre of Christ. Some of them would almost certainly come from Bethany, which was at the

distance of about two miles and a quarter from the garden of Joseph. This place was the residence of Lazarus and his sisters; it had been the resort of Jesus and his apostles; and it lay in the way from Jericho to Jerusalem; and it is next to certain that the greater part of the apostles and other Galilean disciples would be residing there. The party of women who came from Bethany would have to pass over the Mount of Olives, and to cross the city to the south of the Temple.—Salome, with John and Peter, might be residing two or three furlongs from the sepulchre, in the direction of Mount Zion.—The palace of Herod was less than a quarter of a mile from the sepulchre, in the northern part of the city.—There is no improbability in the supposition that Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary,” came from Bethany with some other women; and that they called for Salome as they went to the sepulchre. These suppositions may be varied; and it would be frivolous to lay too much stress upon them; but it is incumbent upon the person who attempts to give a monotesaron, to shew that, without involving any unreasonable or improbable supposition, all the details are capable of being realized to the conceptions.

The sepulchre in which the Lord lay, was in a garden near the place of crucifixion. There is no adequate reason to doubt that what is at present shewn as the sepulchre, corresponds at least in situation; it is within the present walls, but was without the ancient. It was a cave hollowed out in the side of a rock, with a low and narrow doorway into it; and it may have been about twelve feet long, and seven wide.

#### NARRATIVE OF THE EARLY OCCURRENCES ON THE MORNING OF THE RESURRECTION.

I now proceed to give the narrative, in that form on which my mind rests with satisfaction.

‘When the sabbath was ended,’ that is after sunset on Saturday, ‘Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought sweet spices that they might go and annoint the Lord.’ ‘And very early in the morning, the first day of the week,’ Mary Magdalene and others from Bethany setting out while it was yet dark, ‘they came to the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, who shall roll the stone



away for us from the mouth of the sepulchre, (for it was very great;) and when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away.\* Then Mary Magdalene *inferring*, as appears, that the body had been removed, and without stopping to examine into the fact, ‘runneth and cometh to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith to them, They have taken away the Lord from the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.’ (John xx. 2.)

‘Now’ shortly before the arrival of the women ‘there was a great earthquake;† for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone from the entrance of the sepulchre and sat upon it. His aspect was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the watchmen trembled and became as dead men.’ (Matthew xxviii. 2-4.)

Mary Magdalene having departed, the other Mary and one or more of her companions, ‘entered into the sepulchre, and saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he said unto them, Be not affrighted; ye are seeking Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him, as he said unto you: lo! I have told you. And they went out quickly and fled from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy; and they ran to tell his disciples: but they trembled and were amazed; and they said nothing to any one (i. e. on the way) for they were afraid.’ (Mark xvi. 5-8, and Matthew xxviii. 5-8.)

Very soon after the first company of women had left the

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\* Mark xvi. 1-4. In the 4th verse is one of those instances of the transposition of parenthetical expressions, of which we see several in St. Mark's Gospel.

† Wakefield (in Matthew xxviii. 2) translates *σεισμός* disturbance. It is said in verse 4 that the soldiers who were watching the sepulchre, *ἐταράχθησαν* were alarmed. The expression ‘for the angel of the Lord descended,’ &c., suits Wakefield's interpretation better than the common one. The original word also occurs in ch. viii. 24, xxiv. 7, and xxvii. 54; but none of these instances supports Wakefield's rendering. Bishop Pearce renders the expression, *a great commotion*: Le Clerc and Hammond interpret it to signify *a tempest*.

sepulchre, Joanna arrived at the garden of Joseph, accompanied by some others of those women who had followed Jesus from Galilee. (Luke xxiii. 55.) These women (v. 56.) after the interment of our Lord, when they had seen 'how his body was laid, returned and prepared spices and ointments, and then rested the sabbath-day according to the commandment. Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared; and certain persons were with them;\* but they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, while they were much perplexed respecting it, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments; and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, the angels said to them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you while he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And the women called to mind the words of Christ; and returning from the sepulchre they told all these things to the Eleven and all the rest,' i. e. of the disciples—meaning, of course, to all of them whom they met with. (Luke xxiv. 1-19.)

The *arrival* of the first party of women at the sepulchre was at sun-rise—say six o'clock. The second party, Joanna and her companions, may have *left* the sepulchre before half past six. In the mean time, Mary Magdalene had come 'to Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved; and she saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre. Now the two ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the sepulchre; and stooping down,' the entrance being too low for a person to go in erect, 'he seeth the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the

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\* As Luke (ch. xxiv. 1) mentions what the women did, and then speaks of "certain persons with them," I infer that these were male attendants, (perhaps Chuza himself and some other friend,) whose object was to protect the women, and aid them to roll away the stone.

sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes and the napkin which was upon his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but folded up in a place by itself,'—all indicating calmness and order. 'Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed'—believed that the body was really gone; but this was all, 'for as yet they knew not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead. Then those disciples went away again to their own home.' (John xx. 2-10.)\*

'But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping; and as she wept, she stooped into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus spoken, she turned herself back, and seeth Jesus standing, but she did not perceive that it was Jesus.' Her eyes were full of tears, and her thoughts absorbed by the one subject of her apprehensions: besides, the clothing of Jesus was, of course, different from that which he had previously worn; and it is obvious that he spoke to her in a different tone from that which was so familiar to her. 'Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith to him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary! She turned herself and saith unto him, Rabboni! (that is, Master;)' and the grateful woman appears to have thrown herself on the ground before him, clinging to his feet with all the ecstacy of surprise and joy. 'Jesus saith to her, Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and tell them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father and my God and your God. Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples, as they mourned and wept, that she had seen the

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\* The two disciples whom our Lord joined on the way to Emmaus, obviously left Jerusalem before they had heard more than has been already related. See Luke xxiv. 22-24. The early disclosures might easily spread among the disciples in different parts of the city, before the greater fact of the personal appearance of our Lord, became known to them.

Lord and that he said these things to her. And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen by her, believed not.' (John xx. 11-18. Mark xvi. 10, 11.)

Jesus, then, 'having arisen early the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalene, (out of whom he had cast seven demons.)' This may have been soon after half past six. While these events were occurring at the sepulchre, the other women who had come from Bethany, ("the other Mary" and one or two more,) were returning thither as fast as they could, to communicate the message of the angel. 'And as they were going to tell his disciples,'—probably, I should say, as they were passing the Mount of Olives\*—'behold Jesus met them, and said, All hail! And they came up to him, and clasped his feet, and did him reverential homage. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid; go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me.' (Mark xvi. 9. Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.)

During the later part of the day, the Lord was seen by Simon (Luke xxiv. 33, 34.) as well as by the disciples on the way to Emmaus; and, lastly by the apostles, (Thomas only being absent.) They naturally collected together after the joyful intelligence of the morning; and would probably assemble where they last ate the passover with the Lord: and thus closed the events of that glorious day—the birth-day of our 'lively hope' of 'an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.'—I Peter i. 3, 4.

#### • DIFFICULTIES CONSIDERED.

If the foregoing arrangement be admitted as a very near approximation to the reality, it is still obvious that no one of the Evangelists indicates a full acquaintance with all the circumstances; and there are differences which show that the first three could not have had the same idea of those circumstances which they have recorded, as respects the women who visited the sepulchre. But it should be borne in mind by all who study the Gospel history, that, as Paley well observes, "the usual character of human testimony is

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\* If so it must be about a quarter before seven. These calculations merely refer to the movements of the women: as respects our Lord himself, all, on that day, bears the character of supernatural. See Luke xxiv. 31: (also vs. 34, compared with the preceding portion :) and John xx. 19.

*substantial* truth under *circumstantial* variety." "It is completely certain (he elsewhere says) that the apostles of Christ, and the first teachers of christianity, asserted the fact; and this would have been certain, if the four Gospels had been lost or never written: and, therefore, apparent or even real inconsistencies (if any such there be) in the relation of the *circumstances*, can in no way weaken the credibility of the *fact* itself."—After the day of the resurrection was over, a knowledge of the circumstances in which the fact was first disclosed, would become unnecessary for the belief of those who were to be the witnesses of it to the world; and even if it had been the object of any one of them, and he had had the power, so to examine the various persons concerned in the early disclosures of that morning, as to elicit every particular of time and place which they could recall, after its agitating and almost overwhelming circumstances, yet, from the nature of them, it would have been nearly as difficult as we now find it, to combine all the accounts, though faithfully given, as they would be, according to the apprehensions of the individual.

I have already stated, in the Introductory Remarks, the leading peculiarities of St. Matthew's narrative, with the probable causes of it. If any one should deem it unlikely, that Matthew's view could have arisen solely from the circumstances detailed by Mark, he may take another view, viz. that "the other Mary" with one or more of her companions, saw the angel sitting on the stone, before Salome came up; that he told them that Jesus had arisen, invited them to come to see the place where he had lain, and conducted them within: that Salome, at least, (from whom Mark had his account,) came to them after this; that when they were within the sepulchre, an angel (either the same that had been seen on the stone, or another) spoke much in the same way to them as the angel had spoken without; and that he then added what we find in the 7th verse of Matthew and Mark. It is obvious, even from St. Matthew's brief account, that the women entered into the sepulchre; for in the 8th verse he says that they *went out* quickly from the sepulchre, ἐξελθοῦσαι ταχὺ ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου.—Considering the compressed nature of Matthew's narrative, and the period when he wrote his Gospel; considering also that the Greek is, as is most likely, a



translation from Matthew's original written in the Syro-Chaldaic ; I think it most probable that, in Mark's account, we have the whole of what passed between the angel and the women of the first party.

In Mark's account there is no difficulty on the foregoing arrangement ; and the only difficulty in his record is that which arises from comparing ch. xvi. 13, with Luke xxiv. 33-35. This is obviated if we suppose that the two disciples who saw the Lord on the way to Emmaus, received no credit from those of their fellow disciples whom they saw before they reached the apostles who had assembled on hearing of his appearance to Simon. Mark records the first part ; Luke the second.

Luke's account as far as the 10th verse, presents no difficulties, if it respects (as I doubt not it does) a separate party from that whose visit is recorded by Matthew and Mark. His narrative in vs. 1-9, is obviously the detail given by one of Joanna's party. He could not, however, have written as he has done in vs. 10, if he had known what we do from John and Mark ; his words are, ' It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the other women that were with them, who told these things to the apostles.' *These things* must refer to what he had before recorded : but Mary Magdalene's account (see John xx. 1-18) is not included in what Luke has recorded ; nor is that woman's account which is given by Mark, sufficiently correspondent with that given by Luke, to enable us to say it is the same visit. The fact appears to me simply to be, that Luke's narrative in ch. xxiv. 1-9, is that given by Joanna or one of *her* party ; and that in vs. 10, Luke records generally what he had learnt from some other source, viz. that the women whose names he mentions, and others, had been early at the sepulchre, that they had not found the body, and that they had seen angels who said that he had arisen : *these things*, though not *all* those circumstances detailed, the various women specified or referred to had seen. Referring to these early communications, before Christ had appeared, St. Luke adds, in ver. 11, ' And their words seemed to them (the apostles) as idle tales, and they believed them not.'—In like manner it is obvious that St. Luke could not have known the *succession* of events, as recorded by John ; for in ver. 12 his narrative represents Peter as

going to the sepulchre after hearing the message of the two angels;\* but it is obvious from John xx. 2-11, that Peter's going to the sepulchre was before any further communication had been made to him than that by Mary Magdalene, that the body had been taken away. It is further obvious that he did not know of John's going with Peter, nor of Christ's appearing to Mary Magdalene, and to "the other Mary" and her companions. How he confines himself to what he *knew*, may be seen by comparing ver. 12 with ver. 24.

I have reviewed these circumstances very frequently, and with a constantly increasing power to realize the whole, and to perceive that what I doubt not is, in the main, the real train of circumstances, is such as would account for all the facts recorded, received as these were from various different sources. Excepting a little uncertainty whether Mathew's account of the angel's words to the women were identical, in time and circumstances, with those recorded by Mark, or whether the words in Matthew are in part different from those in Mark, I have complete satisfaction in the view I have embodied; and while I invite objections and remarks from your readers, and shall thankfully receive any new light they may give, I have only to desire that, till such is given, they may receive what I have communicated with as much rest and comfort as I do myself.

#### LANT CARPENTER.

P. S. I am happy in seeing that your learned correspondent T. F. B. is expressing those objections which he and other of our brethren entertain against the Socinian interpretation of the Proem of John. When he has completed his statement of them, I shall be glad to have the power to examine them, and to state, in the Gospel Advocate, the objections I feel, against the Photinian interpretation. I hope, however, that before I undertake this task, T. F. B. will state definitely in what respects the Socinian interpretation is "untenable in a *critical* point of view," as well as declare it to be "poor, meagre, and

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\* The Public Version, however, gives that impression more necessarily than the original: this is simply 'Ο ὁ Ἐπίσκοπος, but *Peter*; the Public Version has *Then Peter*.

frigid in a theological." I see that he considers it as already "lying prostrate and expiring under the repeated attacks of the champions of orthodoxy;" but not myself being aware what orthodox champion it is that has so mortally wounded it, believing that it is incomparably preferable to the orthodox interpretation, and never yet having seen, among the numerous modifications of the Photinian scheme, any interpretation that is not liable to critical and exegetical difficulties at least as serious, I still retain my preference for the Socinian scheme. Nevertheless I am still a searcher after truth; and if T. F. B. or any other of your learned correspondents, can, without too much occupying your pages with mere critical inquiry, shew good reason why I should relinquish my present view of the matter, I shall, I hope, prove that I am ready to relinquish it. I would, however, as far as I am myself concerned, beg them to make their objections bear on my own form of the Socinian system of interpretation, as given in the *third* edition of Unitarianism the Doctrine of the Gospel, p. 59-68, and p. 162-172: also p. 160.

THE SCRIPTURE INTERPRETER.—No. VII.

*Luke xxiv. v. 52.*

THIS is one of those passages, of which there occur ten or twelve in the course of the four Gospels, in which it is related that men *worshipped* Jesus Christ, and in so doing, were met, on his part, with not the slightest objection or rebuke. The inference drawn from these passages by Trinitarians is twofold, doctrinal and practical. They conclude that because Jesus Christ was thus, (as they say,) religiously, supremely, worshipped by his followers, during his ministry on earth, and never hinted at the least impropriety in such homage being offered to him, he must therefore be the true and living God, to whom alone all *worship* is due. This is their doctrinal inference. They conclude also, in perfect consistency, that their own practice, of worshipping Jesus Christ together with the Father, has the direct sanction of Scripture and apostolic example.

Our own view of the subject is, that there is no branch of

the popular argument of Trinitarians, in which their conclusions would be more just and irresistible, if their premises were sound. But then, on the other hand, we have a thorough conviction, that there is no branch of their argument, in which their premises are more rashly and erroneously taken up. Undoubtedly, *worship*, in what has now become the only proper sense of the word in our language, supreme, religious, spiritual homage, devout adoration, prayer, and praise,—this should be rendered to Him alone who is the Maker and God of all living. This glory belongs to Jehovah, and cannot without some idolatry, be given to another. Reason and the Scriptures completely harmonize on this point. The only questions which require to be determined, are, whether *such* worship was paid to Jesus Christ by his chosen disciples, in the instances under consideration, and received by him as just and proper;—or whether the word used in these passages of the original Scriptures, and even the word *worship*, by which it is translated in our English Version, did not bear a different meaning, indicative of some inferior kind of homage, perfectly consistent with the simple humanity of our Saviour's person, and the delegated nature of his divine authority. Trinitarians, to give their argument any weight, must adopt the first position. We, on the contrary, maintain the second. It is therefore almost purely a question of fact which we have to settle; or if there be any criticism involved in it, it is surely of a very humble character.

It will not be denied, by any one who has carefully perused the Scriptures, that the term *worship* is there repeatedly used to express those acts of external reverence and honour, which the Jews were accustomed to observe towards great and dignified mortals, such as kings, prophets, or any other wise and powerful persons. It by no means implied the least approach to *divine adoration*, but only *profound respect*. We are told that when Jesus was born, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, “ *Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*” (Matthew ii. v. 2.) Surely these men had no thought that Jesus was God, and that they were come to Jerusalem to worship him as the Deity: they only desired to pay him suitable homage, as *king of the Jews*. So

again, in our Saviour's parable of "the king who would take account of his servants,"—we read that the servant fell down before the king *and* "*worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*" (Matthew xviii. v. 26.) We are not to suppose that this servant intended to worship his sovereign *as God*, but only to express that degree of homage which was suitable to the relation existing between them. Similar observations apply to the acts of the Roman soldiers, who in mockery clothed Jesus in purple, put a crown of thorns on his head, "*and bowing their knees worshipped him:*"—they paid him the sort of reverence usually paid to kings. The unlearned reader is to understand, that in all these instances the very same word is employed by the sacred writers, as in those places where men are said to have *worshipped* Jesus;—otherwise there would be no force in our argument, no fairness in our explanation. But it may be remarked, that this ambiguity is not peculiar to the language of the original Scriptures; it belonged also to the English word *worship*, when our Common Version was made. The reader may call to mind the well-known passage in the marriage service of the Church of England, in which the woman is made to say, "With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee *worship*;"—that is, "I do thee reverence and submission as my superior."

This, then, is our plain answer to all arguments for the proper Deity of Christ, and for the practice of rendering him proper religious worship, drawn from such passages of Scripture. We reply, that unless something further be added, to shew *the nature of the worship* paid to Jesus, by his disciples and others, the mere circumstance of their being said to have *worshipped* him, affords no evidence whatever that they regarded him as God, or that they offered him *divine honours*. They might, and we believe they did, *worship* him, or do him reverence, in a lower sense of the word, as their Lord and Master, their Prophet and King, a wise, holy, and venerable person. This explanation, of course, applies only to those passages of Scripture, the popular arguments from which, in favour of the Deity of Christ, *turn* entirely upon the use of the word *worship*. Where the language to be explained is different, other grounds of interpretation must be resorted to by the defender of Unitarianism.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

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*Dissenters' Claims.*—There is some danger, we fear, that the Dissenters may be flattered into rather too high an opinion of their own consequence, from witnessing the large space which their concerns now almost daily occupy in the public councils of the nation. Petitions from Dissenters for redress of grievances, and debates thereupon; skirmishing allusions to measures already before Parliament for this purpose, or hints and threats of new measures to be produced; these are the matters which are now most surely presented to one's notice, in the public discussions and proceedings of the Legislature. This is certainly a great change, compared with what would have been the fate of such topics, if any courageous friend of Dissenters had submitted them to the attention of Parliament in times not long past. Most of our readers are aware that, since our last publication, numerous deputations of Dissenters from all parts of the country have assembled in London, and through the resolutions passed at their meeting, the memorial presented by them to the Government, and their personal interviews with members of Parliament, expressed themselves in strong terms for full and perfect relief. There may exist reasonable doubts in some minds, as to the propriety of such a step being taken at all, and of some of the consequent proceedings. But no one can deny, we think, that it was a manifestation of the actual wishes and feelings of a large majority of the Dissenters; nor have we any doubt that it will produce considerable effect in the right quarter. We anticipate, especially, that Lord Althorp's proposition respecting Church Rates will either be greatly modified or abandoned altogether. It were idle to legislate in a way which, it is so evident, will not cure the evil. Probably another session of Parliament may be necessary for the settlement of this business.

On the 13th of May, Mr. William Brougham expounded to the House of Commons his plan for a general registration of births, marriages, and deaths; and at the same time offered a scheme for a Dissenters' Marriage Bill. Both measures appear to us, in all their principal features, wise and just. There may be partial defects in them, as there

probably must be in any measures of the kind; but they are decidedly of the right character; they are framed in the right spirit, as they go upon the principle of making these things matters purely of *civil* regulation, free from any necessary interference of the Church. We understand Lord John Russell and Lord Althorp to have declared their satisfaction with these proposals; and we shall therefore hope to see them speedily passed into the state of laws.

Mr. G. W. Wood's Bill for the admission of Dissenters to Oxford and Cambridge, the Bill for the commutation of English Tithes, and the prospect of a Charter for the London University, remain, we believe, much in the same state as at the beginning of last month. It seems very doubtful if either measure has much chance of success. In the mean time, the Lord Chancellor has laid before Parliament two Bills for the abolition of Clerical Pluralities and Non-Residence; of which it is something in their favour, perhaps, that they appear to be highly displeasing to the Bench of Bishops. We sincerely wish the Chancellor well through the House of Lords with these Reform Bills. He is, indeed, a mighty man, especially in wrestling with a Tory Peer; but we doubt if he be strong enough for this.

*Separation of Church and State.* This is evidently a growing question in the public mind. During the last month, the desire to see this separation effected has been plainly and firmly expressed at three large public meetings in the Metropolis; at the meeting of Dissenting deputies held on the 8th of May; at a meeting called for this especial purpose at the London Tavern, Joseph Hume, Esq. M. P. in the chair; and again at the meeting of the "Protestant Society for the protection of religious liberty," held on Saturday, the 17th, Lord Durham in the chair. All this must have its effect. What will the effect be? We are assuredly not now about to forsake the conviction, which we have long entertained, and have often humbly advocated,—that any patronage by the State of a particular creed and mode of worship, any such alliance between civil and ecclesiastical authorities as that which at present exists in this country, is unrighteous in principle, and exceedingly detrimental to the interests of Christian truth and virtue. This conviction we can neither abandon, nor consent to hold in silence, as some

of the oldest friends of the cause appear to us inclined to do, out of complacency to a liberal Government. At the same time, we must express our fears that no good is likely to result from such hasty and crude attempts to urge on a change in this respect, as we have lately witnessed. This does not appear to us a question which ought to be mixed up with the immediate claims and grievances of Dissenters. We cannot, for our own parts, consent to join with multitudes in any precipitate call for the separation of Church and State, until we are made to understand, better than we do yet, what our associates in the call would have to be done consequent upon such a change. What is to be done with the property of the Church? What appropriation is to be made of its buildings? What other institutions, if any, are to succeed it, for the intellectual, moral, and religious improvement of the people? We find the most opposite wishes and opinions on all these subjects amongst every ten Dissenters we meet with; and some wishes and opinions which, if they were to be carried into practice, would speedily render matters a thousand times worse than they are. We are quite satisfied, therefore, that neither the Government, the Legislature, nor the Public, is yet prepared to make this extensive change in a perfectly safe and beneficial manner. Let us be calm and sober in pursuing this object. It is surely for the sake of some great moral and social advantages to the nation at large, that we desire to see the Church separated from the State. Let us be careful, then, that we do not rashly aim to compass the object, in such a manner as will be likely to frustrate the very ends for which it is sought. The Church Establishment, as at present existing, whatever defects and corruptions we may ascribe it, has a certain influence on the moral and religious condition of the country. The moment we can make tolerably sure of substituting in its place any thing *better for these purposes*, then let us by all means call for the immediate abolition of the Church Establishment. But it is just possible that we might have something worse; and therefore, until we see our way before us a little more clearly, until we have some better understanding and agreement as to what shall follow, to call blindly for the instant separation of Church and State, seems to us too much like taking an awful leap in the dark. We often observe, that it is not all who cry out most

loudly for this change that know best what they are crying out for; neither have all who complain of the tyranny of the Church the true spirit of Christian toleration and liberty in their own hearts. Without for a moment concealing our principle, therefore, that all connection between the power of the State and any form of Christian belief is wrong, and ought to be abolished with all convenient despatch,—not by a victory of one party over another, but by the general consent of the nation,—we are still for proceeding calmly and steadily in this great business. We have no inclination to make ourselves instrumental, by violent and ill-digested proceedings, in raising a fierce conflict of sects throughout this land; nor in cutting off all prospect of a better provision for the instruction of the people through other institutions; nor in casting the riches of the Church, that is, of the Public, into the hands of the already over-wealthy proprietors of the soil.

## DEVONPORT UNITARIAN CONGREGATION.

[It gives us the most entire and cordial satisfaction, to insert the following address on behalf of the Unitarian Congregation at Devonport. Our personal knowledge enables us to bear testimony to the truth of all its leading statements; and we are very sure that the kingdom will not furnish a case more highly deserving the attention of all liberal-minded friends to pure Christianity. The meritorious character of the people forming the congregation, and the importance of the station, vie with each other, in presenting the most urgent claims to the attention of the Unitarian public. We heartily desire to find that Mr. Odgers has not pleaded in vain. EDITOR:—]

### AN ADDRESS,

*Submitted to the consideration of the Unitarian Public, on behalf of the Unitarian Congregation at Devonport.*

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,—Having had frequent opportunities of becoming acquainted with the origin, progress, and present state of the Unitarian congregation at Devonport, and feeling a deep interest in its prosperity, I am induced to address you on the subject;

and I feel persuaded that the facts which I shall have occasion to mention, will be deemed a sufficient apology.

Many Unitarians in different parts of the kingdom have already been informed of various particulars respecting this congregation, through the medium of our periodicals ; but as there are probably some who may not have seen the articles alluded to, I may, perhaps, be pardoned in offering to your notice the following brief statement :—

My excellent and indefatigable friend, Mr. S. Gibbs, who for several years has gratuitously conducted the religious services at Devonport, gradually renounced the peculiar doctrines of reputed orthodoxy, and became a Unitarian, through the means of his own reading and reflection. And with an ardent feeling of thankfulness for having been thus brought “ out of darkness into marvellous light,” and with a most laudable and christian desire of endeavouring to extend Unitarian sentiments, he began to lend to his friends those hooks which had wrought conviction in his own mind ; and thus others were brought to entertain similar views of the Christian doctrine.

In October, 1817, the Rev. I. Worsley, (of Lincoln,) then minister at Plymouth, commenced, by request, a Course of Lectures on the Unitarian Controversy, on Sunday evenings, which were delivered once a fortnight in a school-room, at the back of George-street, Devonport, used at that period, on Sundays, by the Universalists. These lectures were continued until the following May ; and the intervening Sunday evenings filled up by the late Mr. David Evans and Mr. Robert Cree, until the latter gentleman (now of Bridport) at the commencement of 1818, became Minister of the Unitarian congregation at Preston. On Mr. Cree's removal, Mr. Gibbs took his place, and the room was kept open until the following Midsummer, when it was given up. In January, 1820, it was engaged again by the few Unitarians then in Devonport, (about 15 in number) and the services, from that time, were continued regularly, both mornings and evenings, by Mr. Evans and Mr. Gibbs, assisted occasionally by Mr. Worsley and a few other friends.

Being desirous of obtaining a more eligible situation, in March, 1824, they engaged a room in Fore-street, where Unitarian worship was regularly conducted, chiefly by Mr. Gibbs, until the erection of their present chapel, which was opened June 21st, 1829. This chapel is large enough to accommodate about 270 persons, and the total expense of the ground and building amounted to £586. The expense would have been much greater, but that almost the whole of the wood-work of the chapel was completed *gratuitously* by members of the congregation, *after the usual working hours of the day*.

Through the exertions of the Rev. I. Worsley (to whom the congregation will ever be thankful,) much was done towards the liquidation of their expenses ; and from Fellowship Funds and private individuals they have received various sums ; but a debt of £152, still remains, which I fear there is very little prospect of their being able to pay off, without assistance from friends. A great portion of the annual subscriptions is necessarily appropriated to paying the expenses of ground rent, insurance, lighting, &c., and the interest of the money borrowed. The members of the con-



gregation are not in circumstances which enable them to contribute largely. Indeed, the pew rents, though not high, are rather more than some of them can well afford, especially since the recent regulations in the Dock-yard, by which the rate of wages is very considerably lowered.

This congregation, soon after its first establishment, succeeded in forming a Congregational Library, which has greatly aided their endeavours to extend Unitarian views. This library now contains upwards of 940 books and pamphlets; and not only do the members study these books at their own homes, and lend them to others, but it is their custom to meet in the chapel every Tuesday evening, for the purpose of reading and conversation on religious subjects. And I know not a more interesting sight than that which is presented by a number of men, in humble circumstances, thus meeting together after the labors of the day, in the house which has been erected mainly through their own exertions, partly with their own hands, and dedicated to the worship of the *Universal Father*, and there reading of his works and ways, and conversing on subjects the most exalting and ennobling upon which the human mind can be exercised.

I have already intimated that my friend, Mr. Gibbs, has all along conducted the services at the chapel *without receiving any remuneration*, and he is quite disposed to continue his gratuitous labours as long as his strength will permit. But having to attend to his professional engagements the whole of every day during the week, and his health having been for some years in rather a delicate state, it is often with difficulty that he is enabled to perform his accustomed duties. He has had assistance occasionally, however, from different members of the congregation, particularly from two young men, Mr. Hancock and Mr. Bayley, whose services were very acceptable, and promised to be highly useful. But in October, 1832, Mr. Hancock, his mother, two brothers, and a sister, were all swept off by that painful malady, the Cholera, in the short space of two days! Hence the congregation lost a very amiable and useful member, and Mr. Gibbs a most valuable assistant. Soon after this distressing event, Mr. Bayley, who had been residing a few months at Bristol, returned to Devonport, and from that time continued to conduct one service every Sunday, until December last, when he removed to Warminster, in Wiltshire, to take charge of the Unitarian Congregation in that town.

Thus, Mr. Gibbs has now to conduct the whole of the public services himself, although (being in his 53rd. year, and frequently subject to indisposition,) it is often a greater labour than he can easily accomplish; yet one which he most cheerfully undertakes. And I need not say how much it would cheer the remaining years (may they be many!) of my valued and indefatigable friend, could he but see the little chapel (the erection of which must be traced up mainly to his own efforts,) *unincumbered by a debt*; and the cause which is nearest his heart—the cause of truth and virtue—in which he has laboured so long, so arduously, and so successfully, permanently established at Devonport.

May I not, then, venture to call upon you, my Unitarian friends, to consider the claims which this congregation has on your consideration and support? In Devonport there are upwards of 36,000

inhabitants. A spirit of inquiry has been excited by Mr. Gibbs's preaching, and his numerous and highly valuable publications. Many persons have already discovered and abandoned the absurdities of Trinitarianism, and have embraced what we consider "the truth as it is in Jesus"; and many others, we have reason to believe, are travelling onward in the same road. Devonport, therefore, presents a wide field for the zealous exertions of Unitarians; and an abundant harvest might, I am convinced, be reckoned upon with certainty. It is with this conviction that I ask you, on behalf of this congregation, to aid them in *removing a debt* which now cripples their energies. Until this be done, they cannot help fearing that, notwithstanding all their exertions, they may yet have the pain and disappointment of witnessing the cause of Unitarianism decline, where they have so long been endeavouring to raise and extend it. In defence of this good cause they have "both laboured and suffered reproach,"—they have struggled on "through evil report and good report,"—they have been despised and calumniated, if they have not had to suffer worldly losses, on account of their religious opinions; but yet they have remained firm in the profession of their faith. They have given largely of their hard earnings for the purpose of disseminating the sublime and elevating doctrines of Christian Unitarianism,—they have laboured with their own hands in erecting a temple for the worship of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"; they have *done what they could*, and now they confidently look for some further assistance from those who are fellow-workers in the same holy cause, but to whom Providence has committed a larger portion of the necessary means. That they may not look in vain,—that their call may be responded to by those who have been always ready to aid the good exertions, and sympathize in the feelings of their brethren, is the sincere wish of

Your Friend in the Cause of Truth,

Plymouth, April 4th, 1834.

W. J. ODGERS.

Donations in aid of the congregation will be thankfully received by Mr. HORWOOD, 3, Walbrook Buildings, Walbrook, London; Mr. G. HOBBS, at Mrs. Cadman's, Corridor, Bath; the Rev W. JAMES, Bridgwater; Rev. S. MARTIN, Trowbridge; Mr. B. P. POPE, Exeter; Mr. S. GIBBS, 33, Navy Row, Devonport; or W. J. ODGERS, 29, Park Street, Plymouth. Probably the Unitarian Ministers in any other towns would be kind enough to receive donations, and transmit them to one of the persons above mentioned.

## INTELLIGENCE.

*Annual Meeting of George's Chapel Sunday Schools.*—The anniversary of the Sunday Schools attached to George's Meeting-house, Exeter, was held in the vestry and school-rooms, on Monday, the 26th of May. Upwards of 150 children, boys and girls, were entertained with tea and other innocent luxuries;—they were subsequently addressed by the Minister, on their duties as scholars and youthful disciples of Christ, and after prayer and singing, were dismissed to their homes, evidently much gratified with the pleasures of the day. The subscribers to the

schools, and many other members of the congregation, of both sexes, and of all ages and stations in life, also partook of tea together in the large vestries. Considerable additions were made to the list of subscriptions and donations, new teachers offered their services, and a fresh spirit seemed to be imparted to these useful institutions. All who were present on this occasion, it is believed, were delighted with the social, friendly, and cheering character of the meeting; all felt that it was a means of promoting the increase of Christian respect and sympathy, amongst those who are members of the same Church of Christ general and particular.

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*British and Foreign Unitarian Association*—The annual meeting of this Society was held in Finsbury Chapel, on Wednesday, the 21st of May. In the morning, the Rev. James Martineau, of Liverpool, preached the anniversary sermon, and, as might have been expected from his well-known talents, deeply interested the understandings and hearts of his hearers. In the evening, Richard Potter, Esq., M.P. for Wigan, took the Chair, when the report of the Committee was read, and the usual business of the Society was transacted. Some difference of opinion, and some rather warm discussion arose, on the propriety of entering on the subject of the separation of the Church and State. Mr. Fox, Mr. Rutt, Mr. Gibson, and other gentlemen well known for their uncompromising spirit and conduct, in regard to all public affairs, were desirous of passing a resolution on this subject. On the contrary, Mr. Madge, Mr. Richard Taylor, and many others, were opposed to such a proceeding, as injudicious, and inconsistent with the peculiar objects of the society. On a division, the quietists had a majority of nine over the agitators. We have the highest respect for the gentlemen who headed the minority; but all things considered, we rejoice in the decision.

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#### TO SUBSCRIBERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

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The article on the history of the Crewkerne Congregation was composed for the press, but has been necessarily omitted for want of room. We are much obliged for the valuable poetical communications from Crediton, and are only sorry they did not arrive soon enough for the insertion of either in our present number. E. W. will see, in page 423, that he has been anticipated by one in whose hands he will probably be disposed to leave the subject. We have also to acknowledge the favors of C. R., of a 'Unitarian Convert,' and of a 'Consistent Dissenter.'

The "Gospel Advocate" having now an extended circulation, reaching to most of the principal towns in England, we beg to point it out to the attention of our friends as a medium for Advertisements: they will be punctually inserted, and on the lowest terms.

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#### ERRATUM.

In page 398, line 27, for "venerable" read *venerated*.

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F. P. Sanders, Printer, Exeter.

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